

PART II: TECHNIQUES OF LAHIRI MAHASAYA'S KRIYA YOGA

Disclaimer

The techniques described here are shown for study purposes only, to serve as a comparison with the work of other researchers. From this sharing I hope there will be intelligent feedback. Comments, criticisms, corrections and additions will be well received. Before you start asking yourself all the strangest questions possible and imaginable, read this book in its entirety so that you have a complete understanding of the subject. You will find that many questions are answered as you continue reading.

I want to clarify that this book is not a Kriya Yoga manual! Perhaps in the future I will write one and then I will tackle the problem of how to divide the whole topic into different lessons trying, for each learning phase, to provide all the necessary advice. However, certain techniques cannot be learned by reading a manual. There are delicate techniques such as Maha Mudra, Kriya Pranayama, Thokar, Yoni Mudra that it is unthinkable to learn without the help of an expert who controls their execution. Each person is different so it is not possible to predict what effects an intensive practice might have on a particular individual.

The author assumes no liability in the event of negative results, particularly in the event that one decides to practice the techniques without seeking the supervision of an expert. Those who intend to carry on this practice should do so with the due sense of the sacred and the awareness of the richness it can bring into their life. While everyone has the right and duty to control their destiny, securing the advice or guidance of an expert is highly recommended.

N.B. When you go to an expert, it is necessary to communicate the existence of any physical problems, such as hypertension, lung problems, signs of hyperventilation ... If you have particular physical problems, an expert can recommend a delicate form of Kriya Pranayama and Mudra. connected to it - and, if necessary, he might recommend practicing them only mentally. ¹

¹ To check if refinements have been added to the description of the techniques, visit www.kriyayogainfo.net at least once a year.

CHAPTER 6

LAHIRI MAHASAYA'S KRIYA YOGA – FIRST PART

INTRODUCTION

Lahiri Mahasaya's Kriya Yoga techniques are explained in chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 of this book.

First Kriya level

The purpose of the *First Level of Kriya* is to overcome the restlessness of the mind. This is done by making the breath calm, subtle. Breath and mind are in fact closely related.

This first level is based on the technique of *Kriya Pranayama*. If you want to know how this *Kriya Pranayama* works you can consult my commentary on a verse of the *Bhagavad Gita* that you find in the last part of this chapter.

With the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* two energies (*Prana* and *Apana*) that come into operation in the spine merge together. Their union gives rise to a new state of energy in the body called *Samana*. This *Samana* enters the thinnest channel of the spine. A particular state occurs in our consciousness. *Patanjali* defines this state as "*Pratyahara*" which means "withdrawal of the senses".

In that state the mind is perfectly calm and can remain absorbed in the meditative state. That state is subtle and can be considered the first step on the spiritual path.

While trying to master the *First Level of Kriya Yoga*, a *kriyaban* may wish to explore and use other *Kriya* procedures. What would be important is obtaining *Kechari Mudra*. This *Mudra* (explained in chapter 7) is undoubtedly of great value as it creates perfection in *Kriya Pranayama* and greatly calms the functions of the mind. Other events of a spiritual nature can happen. The higher stages of *Kriya* can also manifest spontaneously.

LOCATION OF THE CHAKRAS

The *Chakras* are subtle astral organs located within the spine – ideal steps of a mystical ladder that leads the consciousness of the individual to encounter the highest ecstatic experience. In *Kriya Yoga* it is not important to visualize a *Chakra* with petals, with the *Yantra*, with the *Bija Mantra* in its center ... and with everything you find in the classic books of *Hatha Yoga* or *New Age* orientation; it is important instead to perceive approximately its location. The practice of *Kriya Yoga* will refine an initial approximate localization.

When certain particular conditions are established – mental silence, relaxation of the body, intense spiritual aspiration – the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* will take, so to speak, the "inner road" and the *Spiritual Reality* will manifest as something concrete, independent of visualizations and whims of the mind. You will then realize the reality of the *Chakras* in the astral dimension, you will be able to listen to their astral vibrations as well as you will perceive particular tones of light emanating from their locations. The practice of *Kechari Mudra* will favor this experience especially at times when the breath becomes extremely subtle.

The nature of each *Chakra* has two aspects, one internal and one external. The internal aspect of a *Chakra*, its essence, is a vibration of "light" that attracts the awareness upwards, towards the Spirit. The external aspect of a *Chakra*, its physical side, is a diffused "light" that awakens and sustains the life of the physical body.

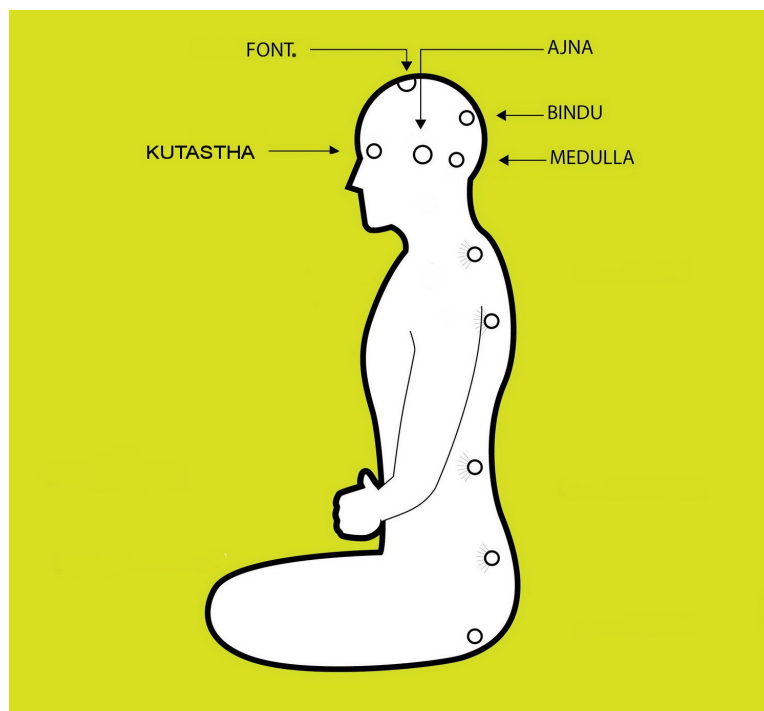


Fig.1 Location of the Chakras

When you go up the spine during *Kriya Pranayama*, it is natural to feel the *Chakras* as small "lights" that illuminate the hollow tube which is the spinal column. Then when you go down, the *Chakras* are perceived as organs that distribute energy in the body. Rays of light depart from the seat of each *Chakra* and revive that part of the body that is in front of them.

The first *Chakra*, ***Muladhara*** is located at the base of the spinal column just above the region of the coccyx; the second *Chakra*, ***Swadhisthana***, is located in the sacral region halfway between *Muladhara* and the third *Chakra*; the third *Chakra*, ***Manipura***, is in the lumbar region

at the level of the navel.

The fourth *Chakra*, *Anahata*, (more simply called the *Heart Chakra*) is in the dorsal region; its location can be identified by approaching the shoulder blades and concentrating on the tense muscles between them. The fifth *Chakra*, *Vishuddha*, is located where the neck joins the shoulders. Its seat can be identified by swinging the head sideways, keeping the torso firmly, concentrating on the point where a particular sound is perceived as of something being ground.

The sixth *Chakra* is called *Ajna*. The *Medulla* and the point between the eyebrows (*Kutastha*) are closely related to *Ajna* and cannot be considered separate entities. *Medulla* is considered the physical counterpart of *Ajna Chakra*. What matters is that by finding the stability of concentration in each of the three points, the spiritual eye, a luminous point in the center of an infinite spherical radiance, appears to the inner vision. This experience is the royal entrance into the spiritual dimension. Sometimes the term *Bhrumadhya* is used in place of *Kutastha*.

In order to locate *Medulla* which is at the top of the spine, the chin is raised and the neck muscles at the base of the occipital bone are stretched; then we focus on the small cavity under that bone. *Medulla* is located right in front of this cavity.

Moving from the *Medulla* seat towards the point between the eyebrows it is not difficult to perceive the *Ajna Chakra* seat: you swing your head sideways (a few centimeters to the left and then to the right) trying to perceive something that connects the two temples. The *Ajna Chakra* site is identified by focusing attention at the intersection point of two ideal lines: the one that connects the *Medulla* site with the point between the eyebrows and the one that connects the two temples.

The energy flowing through the tip of the tongue during *Kechari Mudra* stimulates and stimulates the *Pituitary* (or *Hypophysis*) *gland*. This is an endocrine gland about the size of a pea. It forms a protrusion on the floor of the *Hypothalamus*. It is necessary to clarify this because a famous *Kriya* school recommends focusing on this gland to get the experience of the spiritual eye.

The same school emphasizes the role of the *Pineal gland*. This is another small endocrine gland that is shaped like a small pine cone (symbolically, many spiritual organizations have used the pine cone as an icon). It is located behind the *Pituitary* gland in the back of the *third ventricle* of the brain. Having full experience of the white spiritual Light after long concentration on the *Pineal gland* is considered the last action to be done in order to perfect the meditation before getting lost in the state of *Samadhi*.

Bindu is located in the occipital region and is not considered a *Chakra* in and of itself. However it is a very important spiritual center

because it functions as a door that leads awareness to the **Sahasrara** – the seventh *Chakra* located at the top of the head. *Bindu* is located where the hairline forms a kind of vortex. (This is the *Sikha* point where *Hindus*, with shaved heads, keep a lock of hair.)

In order to become aware of the *Sahasrara* some schools recommend concentrating on the **Fontanel** [we refer to the anterior *Fontanel* also called "*Bregma*".]

The **eighth Chakra** is the highest spiritual center that we will deal with (chapter 14.) It is located about 30 centimeters above the *Fontanel*.

POSITION SUITABLE FOR MEDITATION

We sit facing the East. According to *Patanjali*, the position of the *Yogi* (*Asana*) must be stable and comfortable.

Half-lotus: Most *kriyabans* are comfortable sitting in this position which has been used for meditation since time immemorial because it provides a comfortable sitting position that is very easy to achieve. The secret is to keep an erect spine by sitting on the edge of a thick pillow so that the buttocks are slightly raised. You can sit cross-legged while your knees are on the floor.

Lift your left foot and bring it towards your body so that the sole of the left foot fits snugly on the inside of the right thigh. Pull the heel of the left foot as far as possible towards the groin. The right leg is bent at the knee and the right foot is placed comfortably over the left thigh or calf or both. The right knee is lowered as far as possible towards the floor. When the legs get tired, reverse them to prolong the position.

The best position for the hands is with interlocked fingers as can be seen in the famous photo of *Lahiri Mahasaya*. This creates a good balance of energies from the right hand to the left and vice versa. The position of the hands for meditation and for *Pranayama* is the same as it moves from *Pranayama* to meditation seamlessly. Usually we don't even realize it.

When there are health problems or particular physical conditions, it can be providential to practice half lotus on a chair, as long as it has no armrests and is large enough. This way, one leg at a time can be lowered and the knee joint relaxed!

Siddhasana: (Perfect Pose) is of medium difficulty. The sole of the left foot is placed against the right thigh while the heel presses on the perineum. The right heel is placed against the pubic bone. This position of the legs, combined with *Kechari Mudra*, closes the pranic circuit and makes *Kriya Pranayama* easy and profitable. It is explained that this position helps to become aware of the movements of *Prana*.

Padmasana: (Lotus position) is a difficult position, sometimes impossible to sustain beyond a few minutes. The right foot is placed on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh with the soles of the feet facing upwards. It is explained that, accompanied by *Kechari* and *Shambhavi Mudra*, this position creates an energetic condition in the body suitable for producing the experience of the internal light that comes from each *Chakra*. It helps to keep the torso erect when, upon reaching deep *Pratyahara*, it tends to bend or fall. Sitting in *Padmasana* is uncomfortable for a beginner, the knees and ankles are in intense pain. Personally, I do not advise anyone to perform this difficult position. There are *yogis* who have had the cartilage removed from their knees after they had imposed the *Padmasana* position on their limbs for years.

KRIYA PRANAYAMA

Preliminary practice before starting Kriya Pranayama

Do not practice on a full stomach. Wait one hour after breakfast and two to three hours after a normal meal.

Assume the meditation position. Sit facing East. From now on you can use the trick described above to sit on the edge of a thick pillow so that your buttocks are slightly raised. The chin is slightly kept inside (the neck and nape muscles maintain a constant slight tension.) The fingers are intertwined as *Lahiri Mahasaya* holds them in the well-known photo. Mouth and eyes are closed. The center of awareness is located in *Medulla* while the inner gaze effortlessly converges on *Kutastha*.

Breathe normally. Chant *Om* with your voice or mentally (it would be better to say "set the *Mantra Om*") in each of the six *Chakras* from *Muladhara* to *Medulla*. Then repeat *Om* a second time in the *Medulla* and in each of the remaining *Chakras* descending down to *Muladhara*. Do this without losing the focus of the inner gaze in *Kutastha*. In short: one *Om* for each *Chakra* going up; one *Om* for each *Chakra* going down. A full round consists of a total of 12 *Om*. It is recommended to repeat this action 12 times. Proceed slowly: It has been explained that one round should take 44 seconds.

Now begins the great adventure with *Kriya Pranayama* proper. This technique is very subtle. It is learned using attention and intuition. It takes months and months to master it. Let's focus on one point at a time and don't move on to the next until we feel confident where we are.

[II] Take a series of deep breaths producing a sound in your throat

Turn your tongue back as far as possible (baby *Kechari*) by dilating the throat or assume the position of the real *Kechari* if you are already able. I remind you that the center of awareness is located in the *Medulla* while the inner gaze converges effortlessly on the *Kutastha*.

Inhale deeply through your nose producing a hissing sound with your throat.² To make sure the sound is correct, try to increase the friction of the air passing through the throat. Also during exhalation make sure that there is a small restriction of the air coming out of the lungs in order to produce the hissing sound. This way of breathing is called "*Ujjayi*". Don't strain. Maintain a slow, deep rhythm to your breathing. If the environment is perfectly quiet, a person by your side will be able to hear a feeble sound in your breath, nothing if the person is sitting at a distance.

Breathing should be mainly abdominal. This means that during inhalation, the upper part of the chest remains immobile or almost motionless, the shoulders are not raised, while the abdomen expands. During exhalation, the abdomen returns. During the last part of the exhalation, there is a clear perception of the navel moving towards the spine. By refining this experience – becoming more aware of the inward movement of the navel and the action of the diaphragm muscles – you will feel a sensation of joy.

Take a deep breath, then another: don't worry about the length of the inhalation and exhalation. (After a few breaths you will find that your breath naturally lengthens. It is also observed that the exhalation is slightly longer than the inhalation.)

Inhalation and exhalation are approximately the same length. A *Kriya* breath, inhalation plus exhalation, should take about 30 seconds but you can also start with 12 seconds.³

In *Kriya Pranayama* there is a short breath pause between inhalation and exhalation as well as between exhalation and inhalation: each of these pauses lasts at least 1-2 seconds. These two pauses are natural, spontaneous. When the movement of the air is suspended, the activity of the mind is also suspended. Our awareness slips into these spaces and knows a state of Tranquility.

² For a beginner this sound is similar to the amplified background noise of a loudspeaker – a quiet *schhhh... /ʃ/*. There is only a slight hiss during exhalation. The perfection of the sound will be reached through *Kechari Mudra* proper. The sound of inhalation will be very subtle, while the exhaling sound will be flute-like: *Sheee Sheee* [ʃi:]. This sound is also called *Kundalini Mantra*. When it appears it is a sign that *Pranayama* has been performed well.

³ Reference literature says that perfect *Kriya Pranayama* is 80 breaths per hour – about 45 seconds per breath. A beginner is far away from reaching such rhythm.

Lahiri Mahasaya compares the procedure of *Kriya Pranayama* to the cleaning of a sword. This is rubbed from tail to tip and vice versa and in this process a sound is emitted. By rubbing, the two breaths make the Divine Light visible in *Kutastha*. Soon the *Prana* begins to withdraw within *Sushumna* and the breath flows in a thin stream like a silken thread but extremely powerful.

Count the number of breaths using a *Mala* [rosary beads] or the phalanges of the fingers. To begin practice 12 breaths. Over time you will increase by 12 in 12: then you will practice 24, 36, 48 ... breaths, up to a maximum of 144 breaths.

[III] *Feel the Prana moving along the spine*

For a few days, practice only what we have explained. Once this has become natural, try to feel the *Prana* (energy) moving within the spine. A particular attention to the fifth *Chakra* (*Vishuddha* located at the height of the throat) will help you in this.

In fact, in *Kriya* it is explained that the point in which you introduce or expel the breath is not the nose, but the inside of the throat. The movement of the *Prana* in the spine is set in motion quite easily by focusing on the front side of the *Throat Chakra*.

Precisely: during the inhalation concentrate on the front part of the fifth *Chakra*. Feel (become aware) that the *Prana* is flowing through this *Chakra* into your body. Then during the exhalation learn to guide the vibration of *Prana* to revive each *Chakra* from top to bottom.

This particular breathing through the front part of the *Vishuddha* in fact produces a kind of vacuum in the throat: with this effect the *Prana* is not only moved from the nose to the throat but raised within the spine as if you had a syringe. In fact, it is advisable to imagine the movement of the breath as if it happened through a straw. In this way the breath becomes long and thin and succeeds in opening the *Chakras*.

As you inhale, you will feel a fresh current rising through your spine. During exhalation, a current will be felt as a thread of warm energy descending into the spine.

This experience of a cold and a lukewarm current is an excellent opportunity to bring attention inward during *Kriya* breathing. The rising and falling breath has its own sensations of coolness and warmth built into it. This is a tool we can use to go from imagining the spinal canal to actually feeling it.

In *Kriya Pranayama* as taught by *Lahiri Mahasaya* the energetic current moves from *Muladhara* to *Medulla*, where the sixth *Chakra* is located – so there is no attempt to reach the point between the eyebrows. The reason for this is that the *Medulla* is the point where the *Prana* can

actually enter the *Sushumna*.

For a few weeks focus only on this new detail of *Kriya Pranayama*. You will control the flow of *Prana* with the power of the will, always remaining relaxed. The breath will become thinner and slow down. Don't be in a hurry to add the next instruction [III] to your practice. Enjoy in complete tranquility for a long time, or rather a few months, what has been explained up to now.

[III] *Mentally chant Om in each Chakra*

It is explained that each *Kriya* is an *Omkar-Kriya* or a *Kriya* involving *Om*. It is explained that without *Om*, *Kriya* is devoid of substance. *Kriya* produces nothing if performed without the mental chanting of *Om* in each *Chakra*. Only by respecting this, the mind will not get distracted by moving in different directions and will no longer abandon the path of the *Chakras*.

Learn to add the following action to the perception of the spinal current: during the inhalation, chant *Om* mentally in each of the six *Chakras* from *Muladhara* to the *Medulla*. During the exhalation, mentally chant *Om* in the *Medulla* and in each of the remaining *Chakras* going down towards *Muladhara*. So during each breath, *Om* will be mentally chanted 12 times. This is reminiscent of what happens in the preliminary exercise.

It is clear that ascending and descending along the spine producing sound in the throat, perceiving the sensations of cool and warm and at the same time placing *Om* in each *Chakra* is difficult but *Lahiri Mahasaya* invites us to pursue this goal by explaining that without chanting *Om* in each *Chakra*, all kinds of useless thoughts will arise to disturb us. So a *kriyaban* tries with patience to achieve this result.

[IV] *The best attitude to practice Pranayama*

Start each session of *Pranayama* trying to realize that it is a procedure which, in a certain sense, goes on by itself, automatically.

Precisely try to visualize the *Medulla* as a cave where you rest and limit yourself to observing what happens. The correct attitude is to do nothing but enjoy the good feeling of cool air rising up the spine and then warm air flowing down. The feeling of driving the energy up or down with effort is given up. The breath simply goes in and out of the lungs and from this arises an energetic movement in the spine. A sense of joy arises from this event. This way of practicing creates an extraordinarily strong sense of energy after a while. The practice becomes intoxicating. It is at this point that a devotional attitude can arise.

Those who by nature already possess this attitude can use it very easily. In fact, many practitioners report that, over time, they find it easier to let the

"Inner Guru" perform the various *Kriya* breaths in their place. True *Kriya* begins when the technique happens automatically through the Inner Power and the Infinite Intelligence of the *Guru* that is inside each of us. We can say that the mind cannot control the movement of energy in the spine, only the *Guru* can.

[V] *The sound of the breath becomes similar to the sound of a "flute"*

If by chance you have peeked at chapter 7 you will have read how you can get *Kechari Mudra* and practice *Kriya Pranayama* with it.

With this *Mudra* the exhalation coming out of the nasal pharynx has a subtle sound like a faint whistle. It is known that after a long period of practice, the difference between the sound of inhalation and that of exhalation is no longer distinguishable. Symbolically it is called the "*Krishna* flute". *Lahiri Mahasaya* described this sound as "similar to blowing air through a keyhole". He explained that this sound has the power to cut off any external distracting factors including thoughts. Therefore he says that it is like: "a razor that cuts off everything that has a relationship with the mind".

Sound is produced in the upper part of the nasal pharynx. If you feel it, you will have only one thing to aim for: making this sound completely absorb your mind.

[VI] *After practicing 48 repetitions of Kriya Pranayama, establish the center of your awareness in Fontanel*

To establish the center of your awareness to the top of the head, practice *Kriya Pranayama* with a particular position of the eyes.

The eyelids are closed or half closed. (*Lahiri Mahasaya* in his well-known portrait takes this position.) The eyes look upwards as much as possible, as if to look at the ceiling but without making any movement of the head. The slight tension that is felt in the muscles attached to the eyeballs gradually disappears and the position can be maintained quite easily. The observer can see the sclera (the white of the eye) below the iris because the lower eyelids almost always relax. By means of this position of the eyes, the *Prana* collects at the top of the head.

As you remain stable there, only a fraction of your awareness rises and falls in the spine. The sound of the flute comes spontaneously. With the effortless intensification of this *shee shee* sound the awakening of *Kundalini* occurs and the *Omkar* sound will be heard.

At a certain moment you will have the impression of going through a state of mind that resembles falling asleep and then suddenly regaining full awareness, discovering that you are swimming in the spiritual light. It is like when an airplane emerges from the clouds in the clear transparent sky.

Remember to practice in this way only after having practiced 48

repetitions of *Kriya Pranayama* as explained before.

After the practice of Kriya Pranayama

Remain motionless for at least 10 minutes conscious of your breathing which proceeds naturally with its own rhythm. You can choose to visualize it as a sweet energy rising and falling down your spine. In this way the breathing will easily become calmer, almost tending to disappear.

How to use these 6 points

The technique of *Kriya Pranayama* is contained in the first four points illustrated. The preliminary practice that precedes these four points remains optional and is very useful to those starting this path. It is assumed that after a certain period of learning, a person practices *Kriya Pranayama* respecting the four points all together, simultaneously. This is the correct way to practice.

The fifth point is something special because it depends a lot on whether a person will be able to practice *Kechari Mudra*, and it also depends on the physical conformation. The sixth point is for those who decide to practice more than 48 *Kriya* breaths: they practice the first 48 breaths with the gaze focused in *Kutastha* and then raise the center of their awareness in the upper part of the head, continuing to always respect the previous points.

FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF WHAT IT MEANS TO CONVERGE THE INNER GAZE ON KUTASTHA

Let's clarify this important detail because it will become fundamental throughout the practice of *Kriya Pranayama*.

Try to create a gentle movement as if to bring the two eyebrows slightly closer towards the center of the forehead. This movement is barely physical, mostly just an intention. Under normal circumstances an outside observer will not notice such movement even though they may notice it early on. With practice one also discovers that this internal movement also appears to draw the center of the brain forward towards the point between the eyebrows. Don't force the eyes. Just let them naturally gravitate towards the sensation of forming a vertical furrow between the eyebrows. It is a habit that you must learn to cultivate.

However, be careful to respect what we explained in the first point, namely that the center of awareness always remains in the *Medulla* while the inner gaze converges effortlessly on *Kutastha*.

During the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* one is taught to perceive with closed eyes, in the point between the eyebrows, any, even if very weak, form of light or color. We do not visualize anything but simply become

aware of what is in front of us. One can also realize how the sound of breathing amplifies this perception of light. If one goes ahead like this, breath by breath, it is possible to realize how even the faintest sensation of light transforms into a clear light. Then the various scattered lights gather into a round circular light known as the Spiritual Eye or "Single Eye".

Well this beautiful experience does not happen to all those who practice. We discover that to approach this experience it is not correct to force yourself to move in the direction of our gaze but to move backwards, towards the back of the spine where the *Medulla* and the *Pineal gland* are located. This is how a great experience of inner light occurs.

If course, bringing attention to the point between the eyebrows with eyes open during our day is a correct attitude to invite the Divine to accompany us during all life's experiences. But when we practice *Kriya* meditation this attention must not remain "in front" but move "behind" as we have explained.

TWO VERY USEFUL PROCEDURES FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIFFICULTY TO PRACTICE KRIYA PRANAYAMA FOR THE FIRST TIME

Those who undertake the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* may find it difficult to put into practice the instructions that have just been described. I recommend two practices to them to familiarize with for a few weeks. In my opinion these techniques are within the reach of any spiritual seeker.

Nadi Sodhana

Before starting the exercise, it is important to clean the nostrils so that the breath can flow freely. This can be done using water, inhaling eucalyptus essence and blowing your nose. If one of the nostrils is always blocked, this is a medical problem that must be taken into due consideration. If the obstruction is caused by a serious cold, no *Pranayama* exercises should be practiced.

The mouth must be closed. Focus on the *Muladhara Chakra*. Close the right nostril with your right thumb and inhale through the left nostril slowly, evenly and deeply for 6-10 seconds. Visualize that you are attracting the energy contained in the inhaled air and lifting it along the left side of the spine. Close both nostrils and hold your breath for 3-6 seconds.

During this hold, contract the muscles at the base of the spine. This contraction is called *Mula Bandha*. Open your right nostril and exhale through it, always in the same slow, uniform and deep rhythm.

Keeping the left nostril closed, inhale through the right nostril. Visualize that you are attracting the energy contained in the inhaled air and

lifting it along the right side of the spine. Close both nostrils and hold your breath for 3-6 seconds. During this hold, practice the *Mula Bandha* contraction that we explained earlier. Close the right nostril and exhale through the left nostril slowly, evenly and deeply for 6-10 seconds.

This is a cycle. Six cycles are enough. The fingers can be used in different ways to open and close the nostrils, everyone does as he pleases.

Ujjayi Pranayama

This exercise is very useful for forming an idea of what happens in *Kriya Pranayama*.

Begin by breathing deeply in and out through the nostrils, making a sound/noise in the throat. Just focus on that sound. After a few breaths, the duration of each breath stretches effortlessly. Continue until you notice two sensations: cool on inhalation, warmth on exhalation. Enjoy these comfortable sensations while remaining immobile and impassive. It is obvious that you are not practicing the classical technique of *Kriya Pranayama*. You are not guiding the energy up on the inhale and down on the exhale. Furthermore, you are not trying to perceive the location of each *Chakra*.

Now perceive the point between the eyebrows (*Kutastha*) as a cave where you are sitting with the firm intention of remaining still and enjoying the good feeling that this way of breathing produces.

Do not impose a precise rhythm on the two phases of the breath. Both of these phases take place not on the basis of a rhythm but when the urge to breathe naturally arises. If you don't follow this instruction, the effects will be minimal.

Gradually discover how the exhalation reveals inherent power. That is, you realize that each exhalation is accompanied by a certain energy that is created in your lungs and torso. The more you observe this, the deeper the awareness of this energy becomes. All of this happens spontaneously, you don't have to force yourself to intensify any sensation.

At some point, in an extremely natural way, you will have reached the simplest way of practicing *Kriya Pranayama*. The wonderful fact is that this *Pranayama* leads you into a state of great inner absorption!

SOME CLARIFICATIONS

Explanation of the verse of the Bhagavad Gita quoted in chapter 2

"By offering the inhaling breath in the exhaling breath, and the exhaling breath in the inhaling breath, the yogi neutralizes both of these breaths thus releasing the energy from the heart and bringing it under control."
[*Bhagavad Gita* IV 29]

During the inhalation ("*inhaling breath*") you experience a form of energy that enters the body along with the air through the nose, descending into the pharynx, larynx, trachea, lungs ... But you also experience another form of energy (*Apana*) which is rising from the base of the spine, moves within the spine, reaching the high *Chakras*. These two movements of energy occur simultaneously.

During the exhalation ("*exhaling breath*") the stale/consumed air leaves the body. During this fact a subtle energy (*Prana*) moves downward from *Medulla* to *Muladhara*, piercing each *Chakra*.

Ultimately, during *Kriya Pranayama* two opposite forms of energy *Apana* and *Prana* continuously approach each other. In normal life *Apana* current moves downwards while *Prana* moves upwards. Instead in *Kriya Pranayama* they are made to move in the opposite direction to what is natural to them. This fact is repeated many times until *Prana* and *Apana* succeed to merge together and become stable in the region of the girdle (navel). After many inhalations and exhalations these two forms of energy know the state that *Lahiri Mahasaya* called "*Tranquility*".

Possibility of listening to the inner sounds while mentally chanting Om in each Chakra

The teaching is to chant *Om* mentally in each *Chakra* by rising (during inhalation) and descending (during exhalation) along the spine. This mental chant of *Om* is an aid in making the described procedure easier. You simply teach your awareness to be more disciplined, to patiently obey you as you go up and down the spine.

During *Kriya Pranayama* it may happen to hear internal sounds that are not related to the breathing process. They could come from the activity of the *Chakras*. The practitioner may hear a continuous ringing similar to that of a bell in the distance. This experience could change into the sound of "many waters". This is the true sound of *Om*. *Lahiri Mahasaya* describes this sound as "produced by many people who keep hitting the disc of a bell" and explains that it is "continuous like oil flowing from a container". Surely when you listen to the sound of flowing waters or waves lashing the rocks, you will find yourself in an ecstatic state.

A very important fact to understand is that the event of perceiving these sounds is not produced by the intensity of a single moment of deep concentration but by the sum of various efforts during the daily sessions of *Kriya* (by "effort" we mean the meticulous attention to any inner sound, no matter how faint it is.) What is essential is to carry on an unchangeable will to chase the echo of the *Om* mental chant until you get to perceive the

astral sounds. Your ability to hear inner sounds will improve.

The advanced form of Kriya Pranayama

In the fourth part of this book you will learn two other variants of *Kriya Pranayama*. From other sources you will be able to learn more. Now is it possible that in these variants there is only one that can be called the "original" one, while the others would be modifications of little value? Is it correct to think that the technique of *Kriya Pranayama* explained in chapters 6 and 7 is that of *Lahiri Mahasaya* and therefore the only correct one?

The truth is that even the version that I have proposed and which very faithfully embodies the instructions of *Lahiri Mahasaya* is still only a PREPARATION for a very, very profound experience of *Pranayama*. I am referring to the advanced form of *Kriya Pranayama* which occurs with an extremely subtle breath.

Let me explain: at the beginning of the *Kriya* path the breath is often unruly, it is difficult to guide it upwards within the spinal canal. This is because the paths of the *nadis* are blocked. Gradually, thanks to a continuous and persistent work of channeling the *Prana* along the spine, the *Prana* is finally internalized.

Then the breath will have a very thin, almost imperceptible sound without constriction of the throat. As we have seen, the sign of good *Pranayama* is that its sound is like that of a flute. But other people shouldn't hear it. This sound will seem to have a life of its own or will move without any effort on the part of the practitioner. This phase of *Pranayama* has been defined by *Lahiri Mahasaya* as "*Excellent Pranayama*" or **Uttam Pranayama**, a higher form of *Pranayama*. Consciousness and intoxication mix and the mind enters perfect stillness.

But you never have to strive to reach this state, you have to get there naturally through practice. Ideally, the inhalation lasts 22 seconds (including the pause) and the exhalation another 22 seconds (including the pause). This *Pranayama* must be done in series of 12 *Pranayamas* to progressively reach 144 *Pranayamas* for each session. It takes about a year to achieve this.

For the present moment, the practice we have described in 6 points in this chapter is a real gem, it represents the quintessence of beauty; with it, time flies without noticing and what might seem like an exhausting task turns out to be as easy as a moment of rest. Now just focus on this way of practicing. The rest will come in time.

The perfection of Kriya Pranayama

There will come a day in the practice when the real *Kriya Pranayama*

finally STARTS. The breathing of the air is reduced to a point or it is completely interrupted and all the cells of the physical body are nourished with Divine *Prana*. I mean that a complete cessation of any respiratory action is achieved.

This state is experienced after years of *Kriya practice*. It has nothing to do with forcibly holding your breath. It does not consist in the fact, although important, that the breath becomes more and more calm. We are talking about the state in which the breath is completely absent, with the consequent dissolution of the mind.

Many *kriyabans* are unable to conceive of such a state. There is an aura of mystery surrounding his description; people think it is impossible and that any claims about its occurrence are false. Nonetheless, it is possible to experience this state. When it occurs, a *kriyaban* does not feel the need to breathe in; or he takes a short inhalation and does not feel the need to exhale for a very long time. (For longer than science judges possible.)

Those who experience this state realize, with genuine sincerity, that they are not breathing at all; realizes that fresh energy supports the body from within, without the need for oxygen. According to *Kriya* theory, this state is the result of having entered with consciousness (and therefore with *Prana*) the channel of *Sushumna* within the spine.

CHAPTER 7

LAHIRI MAHASAYA'S KRIYA YOGA – SECOND PART (Completion of First Kriya)

The practice described in the previous chapter is the central technique of the path of *Kriya Yoga*. Its value is inestimable: there is no other similar procedure in beauty and effectiveness. Now, adding a few more technical instructions contains within itself a slight chance of disturbing this idyll. But the traditional *First Kriya* teaching involves using three other procedures.

There is *Maha Mudra* which is the best preparation for the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* and there is also *Navi Kriya* and *Yoni Mudra* that are usually practiced after it. To these techniques we will also add the practice of *mental Pranayama* and explain what *Kechari Mudra* consists of.

Study each part of this chapter with great patience and try to practice these instructions. Don't worry, you will find that these techniques are also very enjoyable and useful.

MAHA MUDRA

Use a carpet placed on the floor to practice the following procedure. Bend the left leg under the body so that the left heel is as close to the perineum as possible; the right leg is extended forward. Inhale deeply, feel the energy rising in the head along the spine.

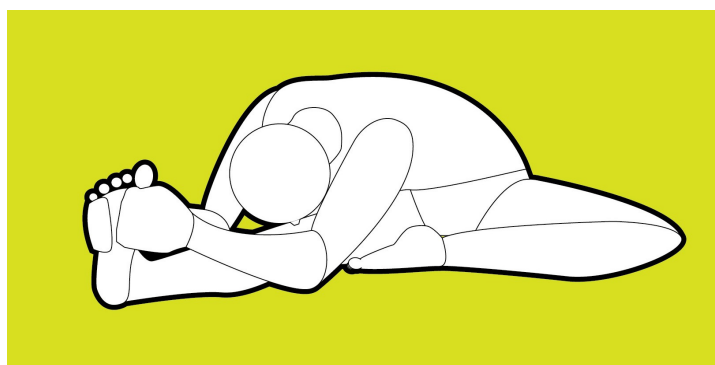


Fig.2 Maha Mudra

Hold your breath, lean forward (very relaxed) so that you can grab your right toes with both hands, gently pull them back a little. In this fully extended position, the chin is naturally pressed to the chest. Keep holding your breath and mentally chant *Om* in the point between the eyebrows 6 times.

You can contract the anal and abdominal muscles and draw the

abdominal muscles slightly inward so that the navel moves towards the lumbar center. Still holding the breath, return to the starting position and with a long exhalation, visualize the warm energy that descends along the spine to *Muladhara Chakra*.

Repeat the procedure with the role of the legs reversed and finally repeat the procedure keeping both legs extended. This is one *Maha Mudra*; takes about 60-80 seconds. *Maha Mudra* is practiced three times.

Variant of Maha Mudra

As you stretch forward, you can relax your breath and you can choose to repeat the *Mantra Om* 12 times not in *Kutastha* but in *Muladhara Chakra*.

Note 1

This *Mudra* must succeed easily, one must not get hurt! At first, many *kriyabans* cannot keep their leg straight without risking hurting their back or knee. To avoid this, you can let the extended leg be a little bent at the knee so that the position is comfortable!

Note 2

The most serious *Kriya* schools recommend that for every 12 *Kriya Pranayama*, one *Maha Mudra* is performed – it being understood that three is the minimum number. (Just to understand, those who practice 60 *Kriya Pranayama* should practice *Maha Mudra* five times, while those who practice 12 or 24 should practice three.) Unfortunately, having listened to various *kriyabans*, I can say that it is a miracle to find one that practices the three repetitions expected. There are people who delude themselves that they are practicing *Kriya* correctly without ever practicing even one single *Maha Mudra*! It is clear that by permanently depriving oneself of it and living a sedentary life, the spine becomes less elastic. As the years go by, conditions worsen and it becomes almost impossible to maintain the correct meditation posture for more than a few minutes – this is why *Maha Mudra* is so important for a *kriyaban*.

Effects

Maha Mudra contains all three *Bandhas*. Applied simultaneously with the body bent forward, without using excessive contraction, they help to be aware of both ends of the *Sushumna* and produce the sensation of an energetic current moving up in the spine. In time it is possible to perceive the whole *Sushumna* as a radiant channel. There are accounts of *yogis* who have achieved fantastic experiences using this technique alone. According to what they say, the perception of *Sushumna* has increased enormously. There are *kriyabans* who have set aside all the other *Kriyas* and are practicing 144 *Maha Mudra* a day divided into two sessions. They consider *Maha Mudra* to be the most useful technique in all of *Kriya Yoga*.

Details of little importance

I have noticed that some schools insist on irrelevant details. For example, they insist that when extending the right leg forward, one should bend the left leg under the body so that the left heel is as close to the perineum as possible. It is explained that the left heel is able to exert pressure on the perineum. This pressure stimulates awareness of the *Muladhara Chakra* in the coccyx region at the base of the spine. [Of course, when extending the left leg, the right leg creates pressure.]

Another example is when some schools teach to bring the knee of the leg that is about to be stretched (or both knees, before the third movement) closer to the body so that the upper leg is as close to the chest as possible. The hands, with intertwined fingers, are placed around the knee and put pressure on it. They say this helps keep the back straight and causes the inner sound of the *Anahata Chakra* to become audible.

NAVI KRIYA

For many people this technique is boring and they skip it. In fact it is not strictly necessary. It will become so when we face a particular teaching foreseen in the so-called *higher Kriyas*, precisely: the *Thokar*.

Navi Kriya

Forget the breath, let it be natural. Lower the chin to the hollow of the throat. *Om* is chanted 100 times – either with the voice, or mentally – in the navel area. The chin is then raised as far as possible and *Om* is chanted about 25 times in the third *Manipura Chakra*. This is one *Navi Kriya*. Practice four *Navi Kriyas*.

In this exercise, if desired, the hands can also be involved. With the fingers interlocked, palms down and the tips of the thumbs touching, the thumbs lightly press the navel along with each *Om* chant. Then when the chin is raised, the fingers are intertwined behind with the palms facing upwards. For each *Om*, the thumbs apply light pressure on the lumbar vertebrae.

Note

Some schools recommend practicing a few *Kapalabhati* breaths before *Navi Kriya*. This serves to make the effect of *Navi Kriya* more intense. The *Kapalabhati* breath is explained in the appendix n.6. It is found towards the end of the book, before the glossary.

Variant of Navi Kriya

Visualize a thin channel coming out of the point between the eyebrows curves and goes down into the navel.

It involves chanting the *Mantra Om* alternately between the point

between the eyebrows and the navel. Precisely, when it comes natural to take an inhalation, inhale, rise with the consciousness along the visualized channel, from the navel to the point between the eyebrows, pause for a moment and chant *Om* mentally. When it is natural for you to exhale, exhale, go down with the consciousness along the visualized channel to the navel, pause for a moment and chant *Om* mentally. By repeating this, you will feel very strongly that the breath calms down and tends to disappear.

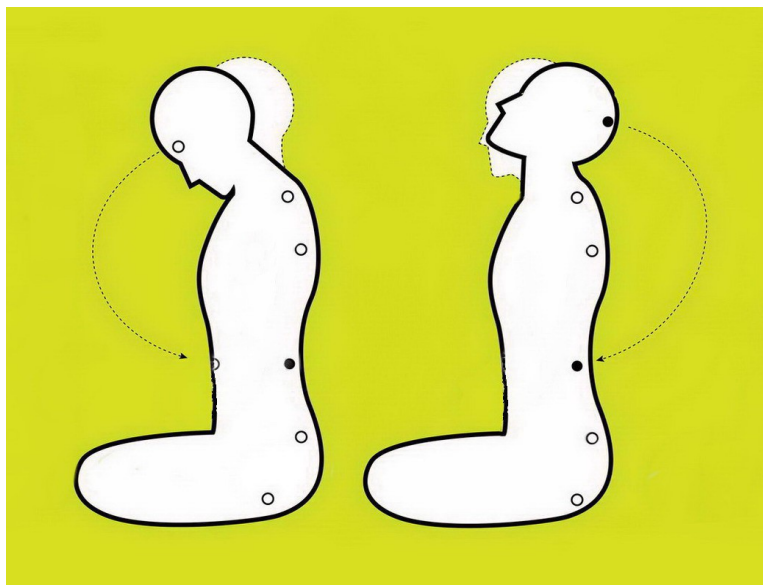


Fig.3 Simple form of Navi Kriya

When *Om* is chanted about 100 times, lift your chin. Visualize another subtle channel that connects (externally to the body) the *Bindu* with the third *Chakra*. Let your breath flow freely up and down that channel. When *Om* is chanted about 25 times in all, return to your normal chin position. This is one *Navi Kriya*. Repeat this exercise four times.

YONI MUDRA

This technique is only practiced in the deep stillness of the night, when silence is all around and one is totally and perfectly relaxed. *Yoni Mudra* generates such a concentration of energy at the point between the eyebrows that the quality of sleep following changes for the better. In other words, after passing through the layers of the subconscious, awareness can reach the so-called state of "Super-consciousness."

After a deep *Kriya* inhalation, having guided the energy in the central part of the head, close the ears with the thumbs, the eyelids with the index fingers, the nostrils with the middle fingers, the lips with the ring and little fingers. Hold your breath while mentally repeating *Om* several times and

observe any light in the point between the eyebrows. Hold your breath as long as this is comfortable. The elbows are parallel to the ground and point outward. Don't let them go down with fatigue, support them in some way if necessary.

During this action aimed at perceiving the light, the index fingers must not press on the eyes – this would be harmful and of no use! You can pull the lids down with your index fingers and press on the top of the cheekbones at the corners of the eyes. When you feel the need, exhale, moving awareness down the spine. This is *Yoni Mudra* which is normally performed only once.

After *Yoni Mudra*, stay focused as long as possible at the point between the eyebrows trying to perceive the light of *Kutastha*.

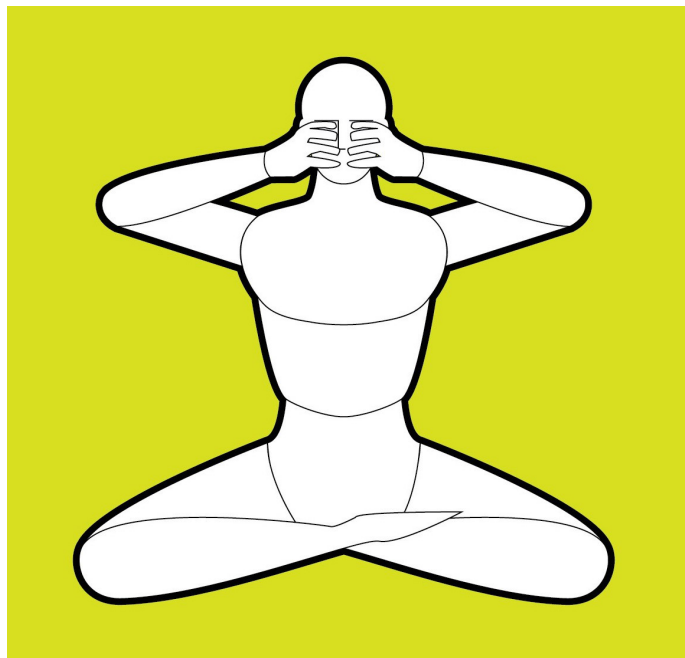


Fig.4 Yoni Mudra

Some important schools give the following instruction: increase the number of *Om* repetitions by one a day (while you are holding your breath), up to a maximum of 200. You should never force it. But how is it possible to achieve these results without forcing? We realize that satisfying this request is of enormous difficulty. I believe that this undertaking can only be seriously approached after dealing with the *Thokar* procedure. For the moment, for those who at least want to start this journey, I share a simple remedy that can lessen the discomfort of a long *Kumbhaka*.

At the end of a moderate inhalation (not the typical *Kriya Pranayama*, but a very short one), firmly close all the openings of the head except the nostrils, let out a small amount of air, then immediately close the nostrils. Relax the chest muscles as if you want to start a new inhalation:

this gives the sensation that the breath has become calm in the area from the throat to the point between the eyebrows. In this situation, the concentration on the point between the eyebrows and the *Om* repetition can be carried on long enough.

MENTAL PRANAYAMA

Once the *Kriya Yoga* techniques are completed, the moment of pure "Meditation" occurs.

There are several definitions of "Meditation": some consider it a mental procedure or being absorbed in a particular ecstatic state (mystical rapture.) Some simply recommend enjoying the effects of *Kriya Pranayama* without adding further clarification. In the previous chapter I advised you to remain motionless for at least 10 minutes while remaining conscious of your breath that goes on naturally with its rhythm or visualizing it as an energy that rises and falls along the spine.

We now explain that the last part of the routine is the best time to move towards the breathless state using a particular concentration on the *Chakras*. We define this action: *Mental Pranayama*.

The *Chakras* can be compared to psycho-physical "knots" that can be untied if "touched" with our concentration. When we become able to untie these knots we will feel as vast and free as heaven and we will melt into pure joy. A *Kriya* routine that does not end with the enjoyment of such sweetness is like when a musical group that has gone on stage, has prepared all the instruments, has tuned them and then abandons everything without playing!

We then explain how to practice *Mental Pranayama*. After three deep breaths, let your breath move naturally and forget about it. Move your awareness up and down the spine, stopping in each *Chakra* for 10-15 seconds. Dwell on the first, move on to the second, dwell on it ... and so on. After the ascent to the *Medulla*, the descent begins: fifth *Chakra*, fourth *Chakra* and so on ... One complete round takes 2-3 minutes. Enjoy a few rounds by increasing the state of inner calm.

Try to grasp the sweetness that emanates from each *Chakra*. Do not make any particular effort such as exerting mental or physical pressure on each *Chakra*, simply relax and enjoy a sweetness that occurs naturally. Do not complicate this experience by adding various details that could prove useful in other techniques but not in this one – for example contracting the muscles near each *Chakra*, using intense visualizations and *bija Mantras* ... You would risk all the sweetness being dispersed. Even chanting *Om* mentally in each *Chakra* could, at this moment, be disturbing.

Maintain awareness on each *Chakra* until you feel a sensation of

sweetness, as if the *Chakra* was "melting". What this means will be revealed to you by the practice itself.

So remember: *Mental Pranayama* must be carried on until a beautiful and "sweet" sensation occurs. One day, continuing on the *Kriya* path, you will find that this *mental Pranayama* will eventually become the supreme form of *Kriya Pranayama*, what *Lahiri Mahasaya* called *Uttam Pranayama* (Excellent Pranayama.)

Various ways of conceiving a Kriya routine

How can a good *Kriya* routine be conceived? There are various possibilities. I bring here only three examples.

Example 1 (the most rational way): Maha Mudra - K. Pranayama - Navi Kriya - Mental Pranayama - Yoni Mudra at night

Example 2: Maha Mudra - Navi Kriya - K. Pranayama - Mental Pranayama - Yoni Mudra at night

Example 3: K. Pranayama (12 only) - Maha Mudra - Navi Kriya - complete the chosen number of K. Pranayama - Mental Pranayama - Yoni Mudra at night

The second example embodies the possibility of using *Maha Mudra* and *Navi Kriya* as a preparation for *Kriya Pranayama*. The third example is based on the principle of starting with a short practice of *Kriya Pranayama* and then using the techniques *Maha Mudra* and *Navi Kriya* as a preparation to discover the possibility of practicing *Kriya Pranayama* in an extremely more intense way that at the end it continues with the sweetness of *mental Pranayama*.

KECHARI MUDRA

The ancient *yogis* discovered the importance of connecting the tip of the tongue with the seat of calm *Prana* in the brain. Usually the tongue rarely is able to touch the uvula and almost never gets in the nasal pharynx. It is explained that this hinders the human being from connecting with the great reservoir of energy existing in the *Sahasrara* region.

The practice of *Kriya Pranayama* with *Kechari Mudra* is an enchanting experience, one of the best moments in the life of a *kriyaban*. However, a beginner keeps the tongue in the "*baby Kechari*" position. That is, with the tip of the tongue touches the upper palate at the point where the hard palate becomes soft. This simple fact makes the mind very quiet.

Kechari Mudra means inserting the tongue into the nasal pharynx cavity. *Kriya Pranayama* should be practiced with the tongue in this position. I say "should" because not everyone can practice in this way. We will now illustrate a method (*Talabya Kriya*) for obtaining *Kechari Mudra*.

- ***Talabya Kriya***

The tongue is relaxed, the tip touches the inner side of the upper arch of the teeth. Well, starting from this position, press the entire body of the tongue against the upper palate to create a suction effect.

DON'T TURN THE TONGUE BACKWARD!



Fig.5 Key part of Talabya Kriya

When you've created the sucker effect, lower your lower jaw (obviously opening your mouth) distinctly feeling the stretch of the *frenulum* (the frenulum is the tissue that joins the tongue to the base of the mouth). Release your tongue with a snap, then push it out of your mouth so that it points towards your chin. In the beginning, do not exceed 10 repetitions a day in order not to strain too much or produce a wound to the *frenulum*. You can, after some days, reach 50 reps in about two minutes (110-120 seconds.)

Unfortunately, some do not immediately understand how to make the tongue adhere to the palate like a sucker before opening the mouth and stretching the *frenulum*. Sometimes, even if shown to them in person, they are unable to do it correctly.

Many practice *Talabya Kriya* mistakenly by instinctively turning the tongue back. The main mistake is to focus too much on where to put the tip of the tongue. The suction effect is obtained with the entire body of the tongue: the tip of the tongue must be relaxed.

Note

The *Talabya Kriya* technique can be enriched by massaging both the muscles of the tongue and the frenulum with one's fingers. *Lahiri Mahasaya* was absolutely opposed to cutting the frenulum for faster and easier results. In *Hatha Yoga* texts

there are other tips for stretching the frenulum. A well known one is to wrap a piece of cloth around the tongue and with the help of your hands, gently pull (relaxing and repeating several times) the cloth both horizontally and up, towards the tip of the nose.

I hope it is clear that *Talabya Kriya* and *Kechari Mudra* are two completely different practices! If you open your mouth in front of a mirror during the first part of *Talabya Kriya* you will be able to see the concave parts that form on each side of the frenulum – it appears isolated from the body of the tongue. Instead when you practice *Kechari Mudra*, it is the uvula that comes forward and only the root of the tongue is visible!

Talabya Kriya is a technique that, in addition to serving the achievement of *Kechari Mudra*, creates a perceptible relaxing effect on the process of thinking. Therefore *Talabya Kriya* should not be considered a simple exercise to stretch (lengthen) the frenulum of the tongue. When the tongue sticks to the palate and the mouth is open, in that instant the energetic fracture between our body and the reserve of static *Prana* located in the upper part of the head is momentarily healed. This fact easily leads you into the meditative state. Even after mastering *Kechari Mudra*, *Talabya Kriya* should never be put aside as it creates a distinct calming effect on the thought forming process. It is not easy to justify why, by acting on the frenulum, it is possible to calm the process of forming useless thoughts. The fact is that anyone can observe this effect.

Strange to say, *Talabya Kriya* does not require concentration on anything specific, it is just a pure physical action. Just as a simple attempt to justify this, we can point out how the simple pressure of the tongue against the upper palate, maintaining the suction effect on the palate for 10-15 seconds, can, in and of itself, generate particular sensitivity in the area of the *Medulla*, and this happens in a short time. The detail of extending the tongue also plays an important role. When the tongue is fully extended, it pulls in some cranial bones and guides the decompression of the whole area.

● ***What happens after a few months of practicing Talabya Kriya***

After several months of practicing *Talabya Kriya* daily, it is right to try to check how close we are to *Kechari Mudra*. We then check if the tip of the tongue can touch the uvula, using the fingers to push the base of the tongue inwards. If the tip of the tongue touches the uvula, then for a few minutes a day, try to push the base of the tongue more inward until the tip is able to pass the uvula (i.e. go beyond it) and perhaps even touch the pharynx behind it.

One day the tip of the tongue will enter the nasal pharynx for a short distance. Probably, as soon as the fingers pressing on the base of the tongue are removed, it will immediately slide out. But, after more days of exercise, the tongue will remain as if "trapped" in that position.

This is a turning point. The soft palate (the part from which the uvula hangs) acts as an elastic band preventing the tongue from sliding out.

Striving every day to practice at least 6-12 *Kriya Pranayama* with the tongue in this position – although there are drawbacks such as increased salivation and therefore occasionally having to swallow – the practice becomes easy and comfortable.



Fig.6 Position of the tongue when you enter the nasal-pharynx

After about three weeks of practicing this way, you should be able to reach the same position without using your fingers. The tongue will be able to enter the nasopharyngeal cavity by itself. There will always be room in this cavity to inhale and exhale through the nose.

Kriya literature states that the tongue can also be pushed higher. As any anatomy atlas can show, the tongue, when it fills the nasal pharynx, cannot extend further. That statement should therefore be understood as a hint to what a normal person *thinks* is happening. Indeed, by extending the tongue to its maximum limit, it is possible to experience a great force of attraction towards the point between the eyebrows, together with the sensation of having reached a higher position with the tip of the tongue.

Note on the need for Kechari Mudra to practice Higher Kriyas

The reference literature on *Kriya* states that reaching *Kechari Mudra* is crucial for being initiated into the *Higher Kriyas*. It is not uncommon for a *Kriya* teacher to ask to see the actual execution of the *Kechari* by inviting them to open their

mouths in front of them and checking that the tongue disappears into the nasal cavity.

However great the effect of *Kechari Mudra* is, I firmly believe that it is important but not indispensable. The statement I have often heard – "Until one is established in *Kechari Mudra*, one cannot attain the state of Eternal Tranquility" – is FALSE!

It is inconceivable that the attainment of *Kechari* creates a clear division between people. Relegated to a lower class would remain those poor people who will never have the *higher Kriyas* just because they cannot achieve something physical that does not depend on their effort but only on their constitution. They will never be able to accelerate their spiritual path like those *kriyabans* that nature has endowed with a longer frenulum or a nasal pharynx more accessible at the tip of the tongue this idea is absurd!

PY's decision to grant *Higher Kriyas* initiation to those unable to practice *Kechari Mudra* has my full approval. Considering then the attitude of *Lahiri Mahasaya* to take part in human suffering, I believe that he too has behaved similarly.

● ***First effects of Kechari Mudra***

During the first three weeks of using *Kechari Mudra* proceed very carefully as you may experience a sense of "daze" where the mental faculties seem to be dull. Be prepared for this and consider refraining from driving and any work that involves a significant percentage of risk during these days.

When you become stable in this Mudra, you will notice three main effects:
[1] During the *Kriya* routine, often the breath appears almost stopped [2] Spontaneously the gaze is fixed on infinity without looking at anything in particular [3] The mind is quiet without useless thoughts.

The chatter of the mind ceases; silence and transparency become the hallmark of your state of consciousness. The mind works more soberly and enjoys an indispensable rest; each thought becomes more concrete and precise.

After a few months of constant practice, the tip of the tongue will be able to touch the confluence point of the nasal passage within the cavity of the palate. The soft tissue above the nasal holes on the inside of the nostrils is described in the *Kriya* literature as a "uvula over the uvula". The tip of the tongue touches this small area and remains "attached" to it comfortably.

Modesty is always welcome, but when this is achieved, a positive euphoria is so great (as if one has found Aladdin's magic lamp) that it cannot be held back. If we want to think of a perfect *Kriya Pranayama*, what we have described corresponds to this ideal of perfection.

As for the problems of practical life, you will learn to use the intuition born of meditation to deal with any difficulties that may arise. Within the perfect transparency of an interior order, all problems allow themselves to be resolved.

I believe that one "is born" to *Kriya* (understands the greatness of what he is doing) when he perceives the effects of this sweet practice: his beauty overflows and floods life.

"... it's hard to stay mad, when there's so much beauty in the world. Sometimes I feel like I'm seeing it all at once, and it's too much, my heart fills up like a balloon that's about to burst... And then I remember to relax, and stop trying to hold on to it, and then it flows through me like rain and I can't feel anything but gratitude for every single moment of my stupid little life. (From the movie *American Beauty*; 1999) "

Final note: the reason for practicing the Higher Kriyas

Kriya Yoga is a four-step spiritual path that prepares the seeker to encounter spiritual reality. Its stages are defined as follows:

1. Lift the tongue
2. Pierce the dorsal center knot
3. Pierce the navel knot
4. Pierce the knot in the coccyx center

The main characteristic of *Kriya Yoga* is that these knots dissolve from top to bottom, that is, respecting the order just indicated.

From the moment of our conception, *Kundalini* began a slow descent journey starting from the cells that form our brain, Medulla and then into the cells of the spine as it was forming. In this same order the knots are untied.

Of course, it's not just about removing obstacles. There are so many subtle processes that must take place during these four stages. The *Prana* of the whole body must be pacified, the contact with *Omkar* reality must be created and deepened indefinitely. This leads to the experience, which occurs when the time is ripe, of the state of calm breathing and ultimately the absence of breath. It is good to keep this in mind now that we are going to describe what it means to untie the four knots.

Lahiri Mahasaya explained that the whole spiritual path that leads to the final realization can be walked only with the techniques of *First Kriya*.

What is perfectly understandable is that this practice is perfected over time, both with the help of the *Guru*, when this encounter can take place, and with the guidance of the intuition born of the same practice.

We have already seen how much help can come from practicing

Kechari Mudra. Well *Lahiri* discovered the help that could also come from another practice: that of *Thokar*. He then saw how some of his disciples were able to practice this *Thokar* in an extremely intense way. To distinguish these two practices, the two terms were coined: *Second* and *Third Kriya*.

Later he understood how a further practice could be conceived that would strongly act on dissolving the last obstacle that makes it difficult for the *kriyaban* to enter the subtle channel of *Sushumna*. Then a *Fourth Kriya* was conceived which could be considered both the fact of undoing the knot of *Muladhara* and that of entering *Kutastha*, discovering that the two events are the same reality.

We now come to describe these four knots:

Tongue Knot (Jihuah – or Jihva – Granthi)

The knot of the tongue consists in the physiological fact that our tongue cannot normally touch the uvula or enter the nasal pharynx. For this reason we are disconnected from the energy reserve which is based in the *Sahasrara* region. It should be explained that loosening the tongue knot is achieved partially by turning the tongue back and touching the middle part of the upper palate at the point where the hard palate becomes soft.

When with *Kechari Mudra* we manage to access this inexhaustible inner source, many subtle transformations take place in our psycho-physical system: the most important of all is the quieting of all unwelcome and useless thoughts continually produced by our mind.

Heart knot (Hridaya Granthi)

After attaining *Kechari Mudra*, the journey of calm *Prana* from *Sahasrara* to *Muladhara* has begun. The obstacle that is now being overcome is *Hridaya Granthi* (the knot of the heart.) This knot is also called *Vishnu Granthi*: Lord *Vishnu* is the deity of conservation. This knot creates the desire to preserve ancient knowledge, traditions, institutions ... It produces "compassion", an acute desire to help suffering humanity. By untying this knot, we gain liberation from those traditional, powerful but illusory, bonds that are deeply rooted in our genetic code.

In the *Kriya* tradition this knot is dissolved by perfecting the *Thokar* procedure. A *kriyaban* becomes one with the element "air" (the fourth of the five *Tattwas*) whose seat is the fourth *Chakra*. Getting in tune with the *Tattwa* of the air means entering a sublime state: the awareness of the Sound and the Divine Light are enormously intensified.

Navel knot (Nabhi Granthi)

The navel knot is untied by perfecting the procedure of *Navi Kriya* or by

applying the Tibetan practice of *Tummo*. The *Prana* and *Apana* currents unite in the navel region and activate the balancing current *Samana*. The breath becomes calm and the consciousness tunes into the spiritual channel of *Sushumna* in the central part of the spine.

Muladhara Knot (Muladhara Granthi)

This knot is also called *Brahma Granthi*: it maintains ignorance of our infinite nature and is the greatest obstacle in the spiritual quest, as it obstructs the path of *Kundalini* which would like to move freely within the spine. Until one unties this knot, one cannot meditate effectively. The world of names and forms creates restlessness and prevents the mind from becoming one-pointed. Ambitions and desires trap the mind.

In *Lahiri Mahasaya's Kriya Yoga* this knot is untied either slowly through *Kriya Pranayama* or faster with the *Fourth Kriya* technique described in chapter 8 or with the *Tribhangamurari* Macro and Micro techniques described in chapter 9.

By untying the *Brahma Granti* knot, the screen of illusion is broken and *Kundalini* is then free to rise in all its power and reach *Kutastha*. Time-bound awareness dissolves – the yogi settles in the supreme *Atman* whose seat is in the *Sahasrara Chakra*. Total liberation is achieved.

Conclusion

Higher Kriyas are practiced when there is time to practice them and when the experience of several months or years of *Kriya Pranayama* has made the breath calmer and the mind freer from distractions. The aim is to arrive more quickly at the state in which, having the mind under control, our conscience can totally immerse itself in the spiritual dimension.

CHAPTER 8

LAHIRI MAHASAYA'S KRIYA YOGA (Higher Kriyas as explained by the most part of the schools)

There are many variants of the *Higher Kriyas*; we will try to approach the tradition handed down by *Panchanan Bhattacharya*, direct disciple of *Lahiri Mahasaya*.

These *Kriyas* are divided into two groups: the first group (which we will talk about in this chapter) requires the ability to hold the breath for a long period of time. This skill develops gradually and always with great caution.

In the next ninth chapter we will deal with the remaining group in which it is required to have reached the state of "calm breath". What is this state? Briefly, this breath is manifested when the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* succeeds with a long but extremely thin breath, almost non-existent, while continuing to perceive clearly the ascending and descending current. There are no more sounds in the throat. The duration of such a breath approaches 44 seconds. I realize that it is difficult to put into words what the "calm breath" state is. I think that only the person who experiences it in his own practice understands this.

In this chapter the following techniques will be described: *Omkar*, *Thokar*, *Advanced Thokar* and *Pratichakra Omkar Kriya* [*Pratichakra* means *Chakra* for *Chakra*.] We attribute the name *Second Kriya* to *Thokar*, while to the form of *Advanced Thokar* we attribute the name *Third Kriya* and finally to *Pratichakra Omkar Kriya* we attribute the name of *Fourth Kriya*: these are the names that most of the schools that refer to *Panchanan Bhattacharya* use. In my research I did not clearly understand the name to be attributed to the simple *Omkar* technique. I thought to simply call it "*Omkar Technique* - preliminary to *Thokar*" as for all intents and purposes this is precisely its function.

Omkar technique - preliminary to Thokar

Tradition explains that this practice takes place in the best way by employing *Kechari Mudra*. The reason is that with the help of this technique which turns the tongue in, the mind is also turned in.

The *Omkar* procedure essentially consists of a *Pranayama* whose basis is the 12-syllable *Vasudeva Mantra*: "*Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya*".⁴ By means of this *Mantra* the *Prana* and the mind are

⁴ I received it changing the first "v" in "b": "*Om Namō Bhagabate Vasudevaya*" and in

allowed to "touch" the *Chakras* in a very intense way. The syllables of this *Mantra* are mentally placed in the center of each *Chakra*.

Mind and *Prana* become stable not only in *Ajna Chakra* and in *Muladhara*, as happens in *First Kriya*, but also in each *Chakra*. Thus there is a greater chance of attaining stability for *Prana*. When this skill is attained, one becomes able to still the breath along the entire spine.

The *Om* sound emerges naturally and captivates the mind. At first, the sound seems like bees gone mad, gradually refining into a note that sounds like a flute, harp, gong or thunder.

In the *Omkar* technique there is a stage where the sound reaches its state of maximum subtlety and here the practitioner is immersed in its stability and is overwhelmed by inexpressible bliss. In the phase following this practice, the state of tranquility appears in all its power.

Practical instruction

We have seen that *First Kriya* requires a strong and long breath. On the contrary, in the *Omkar Technique* the absolute necessity of a more subtle way of breathing is emphasized, otherwise the *Prana* will remain unevenly distributed along the spine. If the practice were to be done with too much force, the *Prana* could not calm down and this would create an insurmountable difficulty.

Inhale, in the subtle way we have described, fragmenting the breath. This is done by mentally placing the syllables of the *Vasudeva Mantra* in the seat of each *Chakra*, pausing briefly in each. During the inhalation lift the chin following the inner movement of the *Prana*; *Om* is mentally chanted in the first *Chakra*, *Na* in the second, *Mo* in the third, *Bha* in the fourth, *Ga* in the fifth and *Ba* in the *Medulla*. In this way, in each *Chakra*, the breath creates pressure – effective without being too strong. The practice is optimal when one feels that the breath/*Mantra* is like a scalpel which slightly penetrates each *Chakra*.

Each pause should last one second: this is not easy at all and that is why we have explained how necessary it is to proceed with a very subtle breath. If the practice of *First Kriya* hasn't produced the necessary progress you could be breathless and develop the tendency to accelerate, not to respect the pauses, which doesn't produce good effects.

During each pause, try to perceive the reality of each *Chakra* (a particular sense of calm, an inner light)

Once the inhalation is complete, place yourself totally in *Kutastha*, hold your breath and gently come down a little with your chin. This is not *Jalandhara Bandha* - it is milder. While you're doing this, gently push the

this way I utilize it in my descriptions.

tip of your tongue, which sits above your uvula, upwards. You will have the sensation that it touches the third eye. You feel that this practice puts pressure on your heart. You will feel that the fourth *Chakra* and the third eye are becoming one.

Having this perception, and continuing to hold your breath, rotate your head counterclockwise. Starting from the chin-down position, move to the left, then go back and then to the right and then return to the head position we described earlier. It is as if, as the rotation proceeds, the head fills with energy. During the rotation of the head try to become aware of the spiritual dimension above your head and invite it to come down into your body.

Now the exhalation begins. Concentrate on the practice of fragmented breathing, repeating the remaining syllables of the *Mantra* with one second pauses in each *Chakra* as described above. *Te* is mentally chanted in the *Medulla*, *Va* in the fifth *Chakra*, *Su* in the fourth, *De* in the third, *Va* in the second and *Ya* in the first. Repeat at least 12 cycles of this procedure.

If everything has happened perfectly, you will feel that the attention is fixed in *Kutastha*. From now on you will go deeper and deeper. You will have the experience of listening to the inner sounds: the mind will become stable. When you get good results you can decide to try out the *Second Kriya* to untie the knot of the heart.

Note

If you don't feel ready for the *Second Kriya*, repeat the breaths described above, increasing by one breath a day up to practicing 200 breaths per session.

Second Kriya: Thokar

The element "air" (the fourth of the 5 *tattwas*) resides in the heart *Chakra*. In the *Omkar* technique we have already learned to pay attention to this *Chakra*. Now, after the practice of 12 *Omkar Kriyas* the mind develops the ability to focus specifically on the "air" element that resides in the heart *Chakra*. We will now learn the *Thokar* procedure.

The structure of the *Second Kriya Pranayama* is somewhat similar to the previous breath technique but is intensified by a strong jerk that is applied in the seat of the fourth *Chakra*.

With this *Second Kriya*, the knot of the heart (*Hridaya Granti*) is struck; with the practice of the advanced technique (*Third Kriya*), the knot of the heart is pierced.

The characteristic of the *Second Kriya* is that *Kumbhaka* is practiced in the fourth *Chakra*. *Prana* is held here in this place.

The *kriyaban* places his mind in *Sushumna*, holds his breath and concentrates in *Kutastha*. Then, with the tongue in *Kechari Mudra*, with a jerk, moves the chin towards the chest and guides all its inner strength into the Lotus of the heart: the mind becomes as if dead and a state of Conscious Absorption takes place.

This "jerk" is called *Thokar* – it embodies the perfection of *Kriya Pranayama*. The ancient *Hatha Yoga* texts say that *Pranayama* without the three *Bandhas* (*Jalandhara*, *Mula* and *Uddiyana*) is useless. They also say that the *Bandhas* are useless without the *Maha Veda*. Well, all this is contained in *Thokar*.

Practical instruction

Moderately contract the muscles at the base of the spine. Inhale and simultaneously raise awareness along the spinal column. The hands with intertwined fingers are placed above the navel to create mental pressure over the first three *Chakras*. This pressure is refined by adding *Uddiyana Bandha*. During the inhalation raise the chin following the inner movement of the *Prana*; mentally chant the syllables of the *Vasudeva Mantra* (*Om Namoh Bhagabate Vasudevaya*.) *Om* is chanted in the first *Chakra*, *Na* in the second, *Mo* in the third, *Bha* in the fourth, *Ga* in the fifth and *Ba* in *Medulla*.

Once this inhalation is complete, hold your breath, lower your head forward and touch your chest with your chin. From this position, move your head to the left while also turning your face to the left and lifting your chin until it is over your left shoulder and parallel to the ground.

Then keep rotating your head in the same counter-clockwise direction. When the head is centered between the shoulders and the chin is raised as much as possible (and the muscles behind the neck are contracted) chant *Te* in the heart *Chakra*.

Relax the contraction and continue the counter-clockwise rotation of the head until the right ear approaches the right shoulder, without turning the face to the right and then continue the circular motion until the chin is again in the center and touches the chest. Do not pause but continue the rotation by moving the head to the left, turning the face to the left and lifting the chin until it is above the left shoulder. At this point, contract the cervical muscles and chant *Va* in the heart *Chakra*.

Release the contraction, continue the rotation, but this time, right after, when you reach the center point between the shoulders (the chin is not held up as in the previous round) bend your head forward, bring your chin to your chest, and chant *Su* into the *Heart Chakra* and continue to hold your breath in this position for a few more seconds before lifting your

head.

Apply *Mula Bandha* and *Uddiyana Bandha*: you will feel an intensification of energy in the heart region.

After this pause, lift your chin until it is horizontal again. At this point, breathe out quietly. Mentally chant **De** in *Manipura*, **Va** in *Swadhisthana*, and **Ya** in *Muladhara*. The duration of the exhalation should be longer than the duration of the inhalation. Repeat this powerful procedure 12 times.

Third Kriya: advanced form of Thokar

The *Kriya* that we will now describe is an enormous acceleration of the *Second Kriya* which unties, with greater force, the knot of the heart. Mastering this *Kriya* creates very subtle experiences; perception of "inner light" and "inner sound" become much easier. The mind and *Prana* need to be touched by the quintessence located in the place of the heart.

In this *Kriya* is prescribed the use of a longer *Kumbhaka* than the one foreseen in the *Second Kriya*: in fact the instruction is given to apply the procedure, which we have previously described, several times on the heart *Chakra* maintaining a perfect *Kumbhaka*. There are various ways of conceiving the way of holding the breath: here I describe the two most common.

First way of conceiving how to hold the breath

Start doing the same actions that have been described in the *Second Kriya*. Inhale and simultaneously lift awareness up the spinal column. During the inhalation lift the chin following the inner movement of the *Prana*; Mentally chant the syllables of the *Vasudeva Mantra* as already explained. With this inhalation complete, hold your breath, tilt your head forward and touch your chin to your chest. Then move your head and face to the left by lifting your chin over your left shoulder and continue to rotate your head in the same counterclockwise direction. When the head is centered between the shoulders, sing **Te** in the heart *Chakra*. Continue the counterclockwise rotation of the head as you approach the right shoulder and then continue the circular motion until the chin is centered again. Continue the rotation by moving head and face to the left, at this point sing **Va** in the heart *Chakra*. Continue the rotation and when you reach the central point between the shoulders, bend the head forward, bring the chin to the chest, and chant **Su** in the heart *Chakra*. Continue to hold your breath and repeat all these head movements 5 times while holding your breath. Finally lift your chin until it is horizontal again. At this point, exhale quietly. Mentally chant **De** in *Manipura*, **Va** in *Swadhisthana*, and **Ya** in *Muladhara*.

Repeat this whole procedure 6 to 12 times.

By means of this form of *Thokar* the door of the *Sushumna* is revealed. Experiences of happiness, pain, peace etc. are perceived. If one is able to cut the knot here, most material and psychic slavery will be cut off and the path of *yoga* further cleared of obstacles.

Second, extremely challenging, way of conceiving how to hold the breath

Let us carefully consider this second possibility. It is taught to continue holding the breath even after 5 repetitions of the head movements: the instruction that *Lahiri Mahasaya* gave was to increase the number of these repetitions by one a day up to 200 repetitions of the movement! It is explained that in this way the small shell that hides the state of supreme tranquility is removed and the practitioner gets very close to the state of *Samadhi*, even being able to reach it.

It is imperative not to feel a state of discomfort! "Don't force" is the firm recommendation! This procedure is practiced only once after *Kriya Pranayama* and *Navi Kriya*.

Some reflections on the difficulty of increasing the repetitions of the head movements while maintaining perfect Kumbhaka

Let's try to ask ourselves: how is it possible to comfortably reach the goal of 200 rotations, without interrupting the state of *Kumbhaka*? Fulfilling this request appears very difficult – almost impossible, even though using movements reduced to the essentials. Most *kriyabans* find themselves stuck after 20-30 repetitions, panting to resume breathing. Is it correct to proceed by moving your head much faster? No, this would be silly.

Please consider a possible explanation for what happens to those people who claim to have achieved that goal.

I think that when one is approaching the limit of the ability to hold one's breath, keeping the chest expanded and the abdominal muscles and diaphragm contracted and immobile, it is possible for a small (almost imperceptible) sip of air to come out when the chin is lowered towards the chest and an imperceptible sip of air to enter when the chin is raised.

Note, I wrote "almost imperceptible"! Surely a person does not perform any specific act of inhaling or exhaling. The *kriyaban* is relaxed, unaware of this fact and lets this phenomenon happen automatically and naturally. It may happen that this *kriyaban* is convinced to proceed while maintaining perfect breath holding.

I believe that in this way the goal of 200 rotations can be achieved. Perhaps, thanks to the effects of this practice that we can consider "imperfect", by means of the effects on the nerve ganglia which exert an influence on the central cardio-respiratory mechanism, the practice could take place in ever better conditions. Are these conditions the state of perfect breathlessness? I cannot answer. Surely, the experience of the 200 rotations occurs in a state of consciousness characterized by an increased sense of freedom from physical laws.

I want to emphasize that *Kevala Kumbhaka* (automatic cessation of breath while remaining in a state of immobility) is a whole other reality, an integral part of the state of *Samadhi*. This *Kevala Kumbhaka* is fundamental in the *Kriya* path and can be obtained with the prolonged practice of *Kriya Pranayama* (*First Kriya*).

To conclude the explanation of this *Third Kriya*, I still want to underline a concept: to continue in one's spiritual evolution it is obligatory to listen to the *Omkar* sound. *Om, Aum, Omkar; Nada, Shabda, Pranava...* call it what you want: this experience must take place in the life of a *kriyaban*!

Fourth Kriya: Pratichakra Omkar Kriya

In the *Second* and *Third level of Kriya*, the *Prana* becomes stable in the heart. Now, through the *Fourth Kriya*, the uniformly stable state of *Prana* is reached in the totality of *Sushumna*. With the practice of the *Fourth Kriya*, the *Muladhara Granti* is pierced.

In the methodology of this *Kriya*, the ascending and descending movements of the mind and the *Prana*, and the practice of *Kumbhaka* play an important role. The characteristic of this method is that it leads to the manifold stability which has been only partially achieved up to now.

By raising the *Prana* in *Kutastha* by means of a deep inhalation a particular instruction to practice *Japa* at that point is given.

One holds one's breath and mentally chants the *Vasudeva Mantra* three times. The number of three times is for those who start this practice, later, as we will see, it will be increased.

This is done with each *Chakra* by focusing the *Prana* in each center. The six *Chakras* are perceived as six moons. It is explained that one should be able to hold *Prana* in *Kutastha*. If the *Prana* begins to descend very slowly and deeply below the throat it should be raised again in *Kutastha*.

With this excellent stability of mind, if 12 cycles of this procedure

are performed, one goes beyond the realms of "stability" hitherto attained in *Dhyana*, and the "shell" is broken.

Practical instruction

Focus on the *Muladhara Chakra*. Contract the muscles that are near its physical location. Through a deep inhalation visualize the *Muladhara Chakra* rising to the point between the eyebrows, where you will perceive it as a full moon. Do not "touch" the other *Chakras*. They don't exist. Hold your breath and focus on the "inner space between the eyebrows". This will be easy with *Kechari Mudra*.⁵ On the screen between the eyebrows, a particular color experience takes place – this color is different for each *Chakra*. Mentally chant the *Vasudeva Mantra* (*Om Na Mo Bha Ga Ba Te Va Su De Va Ya*) three times, always holding your breath. Slowly place its syllables in the center of *Kutastha*.

By means of a long exhalation, ideally lower this *Chakra* from the point between the eyebrows to its true seat in the spine. Do the same thing with each *Chakra* of the spine. In a similar way attract *Medulla* towards *Kutastha*. Always remember to contract the muscles of the spine which are located near the seat of the *Chakra* that you are gradually bringing into *Kutastha*. Then complete the "cycle" by acting again on the *Medulla* and then lifting the *Chakras* 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, always being aware of a particular experience of Light in *Kutastha*. In order to break the knot of *Muladhara* one must experience the different *Chakras* and dissolve the five *Tattwas*. The technique is complete if the whole procedure is repeated 12 times.

In the *Kriya* tradition, the *Chakras* are related to the five *Tattwas*: earth, water, fire, air, ether.⁶ Offering each *Tattwa* individually to the light of the spiritual eye, gathering it and intensifying it in the region between the eyebrows is the highest action ever conceived to dissolve the last shell of illusion.

By means of the experience of the different *Chakras*, you will be able to break the knot of *Muladhara*. The sleeping *Kundalini* moves and rises upward. This is the mystery of how the *Muladhara* knot is broken.

⁵ "Ke-chari" is literally translated as "the state of those who fly in the sky, in the ether". A particular "space" is created in the region between the tip of the tongue and the point between the eyebrows and is perceived as a "vacuum", although it is not a physical void. By merging into this empty space, it is easier for a *kriyaban* to perceive the rhythms of each *Chakra* and distinguish them one from another.

⁶ It has been explained that everything that exists in the universe is made of a combination of these five forms of energy. To a *kriyaban* the theory of the *Tattwas* is not a theme of useless speculation. They are conceived as a concrete series of states of consciousness, whose intimate essence is experienced in the last part of the devotee's journey toward *the Absolute Consciousness*.

Now we come to consider the delicate topic of increasing the number of repetitions of the *Vasudeva Mantra* in the center of *Kutastha* for each *Chakra*. The number of repetitions is gradually increased. One should reach thirty-six times for each *Chakra*, always holding the breath. This is what the tradition says.

Here we are in a situation similar to the one we encountered with the *Third Kriya*. At that moment if we chant this *Mantra* slowly, then this achievement becomes practically impossible, a real torture. I respect and write what tradition has handed down to us, nevertheless I continue to believe that the concept of "perfect breath holding" should be replaced by that of "calm breathing" which means a very subtle, practically non-existent breath.

I think it would be absurd to strain and then hurt our body by trying to achieve an unnatural condition. So I am of the idea of increasing by a few numbers, be satisfied with these and not create feelings of inferiority. I think it is best to pay attention to the intensity of concentration and the joy and well-being gained from the practice.

After completing the required number of *Kriyas*, the practitioner should sit quietly in silence contemplating the results. The mind must gradually detach itself from all the various thoughts by plunging deeply into the vastness of stillness and perfect balance. There is no other *Sadhana*. The *Sahasrara Chakra* opens more and more as this silent meditation takes place.

Conclusion

As we have explained there are mainly two ways of teaching the *Higher Kriyas*. In this chapter we have described the first way. Now you are wondering what to do with these instructions. I think that you want to experiment with these techniques and decide which ones will be part of your conclusive routine. Usually many people choose to continue practicing the *Second Kriya*.

However, life is yours. I want to hope that you find the time to learn and practice with enthusiasm also the second way in which the *Higher Kriyas* were taught. This will be a challenging but incomparable experience. We will talk about this in the next chapter.

[Here I want to explain how I got the information I shared in this chapter.

Even before the publication of this book I knew that the original *Second Kriya* was made up of the *Thokar* technique, I knew that the same procedure

repeated several times was called *Third Kriya*. I knew this from a friend who for several years had gone to the center linked to the organization of P.Y. in the vicinity of Calcutta. This center was sometimes frequented by Brahmin who had been initiated into *Kriya Yoga* many years ago. With this Brahmin my friend had spoken many times and discussed the dynamics of *Kriya*. So then I had no idea of the existence of an *Omkar* technique to be practiced before *Thokar*.

Many years later some French friends told me about it, they sent me a detailed instruction which I copied in my archives. It was still a few years before I received other documents from India which clearly stated the importance of this *Omkar* technique. They called it *Second Kriya*, while everything related to *Thokar* they called *Third Kriya*. I decided to practice this technique and realized its importance. This is why I describe it precisely in this chapter.

The movements of the *Thokar* were instead described to me with great accuracy by two friends who wrote to me from the USA: they had received it from an Indian master who for many years, before leaving his body, had lived in the United States. This teacher was initiated by *Sri Dubey* who drew on the teachings of *Panchanan Bhattacharya*.]

CHAPTER 9

LAHIRI MAHASAYA'S KRIYA YOGA (Higher Kriyas as taught by Satya Charan Lahiri)

In this chapter we will describe the two *Higher Kriyas* that are missing to complete the explanation of these techniques. The main characteristic of these procedures is that they are practiced in the condition of "calm breathing."

I learned these techniques from the school that comes from *Tincouri Lahiri* who received this instruction from his father *Lahiri Mahasaya*. [This lineage was continued mainly by his son *Satya Charan Lahiri* and his disciple, Dr. *Ashoke Kumar Chatterjee*.]

The fact is that this school believes that the two techniques we are about to describe are enough to walk the totality of the spiritual path without recognizing the need to practice the techniques described in the previous chapter. Therefore they call these techniques *Second* and *Third Kriya*.

To avoid confusion I will put in brackets the name that was given to them by *Panchanan Bhattacharya* that is *Fifth* and *Sixth Kriya*. The ideal study of all the *Higher Kriyas* as they were taught by *Panchanan Bhattacharya* should begin with what is explained in the eighth chapter and then continue with the two techniques explained here, overcoming the problem of names.

We will start with the *Second Kriya* which will be presented in three steps: *Amantrak*, *Samantrak* and *Thokar*. While the *Thokar* explained in the previous chapter hits the *Anahata Chakra* directly, this *Thokar* hits the *Muladhara Chakra*. It has been explained that when this *Chakra* is hit, the *Kundalini* energy rises to the heart *Chakra*. Hence the latter *Thokar* serves to complete the action of the former.

In the vision of *Kriya* as explained by *Satya Charan Lahiri* preparation is required before starting the practice of *Amantrak*. Specifically, it is asked to practice 200 *Kriya Pranayama* every day (once a day) for three months. Then, to begin the practice of *Samantrak* it is asked to practice 300 *Kriya Pranayama* every day for three months. The purpose of this preparation is to have reached the state of "calm breathing" that we have talked about. I think, but of course I could be wrong, that such preparation is superfluous for those who have seriously practiced the techniques explained in the previous chapter.

The introduction to these *Higher Kriyas* begins with describing the *Tribhangamurari* form which is the symbol of *Sri Krishna*. (see fig. 7)

Tribhanga is a standing body position used in traditional Indian art and dance, where the body bends in one direction for the knees, the other direction for the hips and then the other again regarding the shoulders and neck. *Krishna* playing his flute is most often depicted in a position with the lower leg crossing with the other.

We will learn to perceive this form by engraving it into our body first by simply moving the awareness along a prescribed path, then this perception will be accompanied by the *Vasudeva Mantra*. Finally this perception will be strengthened by the help of particular movements of the head. By repeating this procedure many times, ascending from *Muladhara* to the head and descending, following the path of three curves, each *Chakra* will be strongly stimulated and a great transformation will take place in us.

Some say that the *Tribhangamurari movement* is a universal event that appears spontaneously when a person practices *Kriya Pranayama* for very long sessions (for example 200 or 300 repetitions during a single session.) I think that this movement rarely appears spontaneously: it is perceived after many attempts, acting patiently.

What happens when this current is perceived is difficult to express because we have no words to describe a reality that is beyond the mind. The *Tribhangamurari* current seems to belong to another world.

The 3 procedures *Amantrak*, *Samantrak* and *Thokar* are not to be practiced at the same time. If, to be able to go faster, one does this, the only effect is to imprint in one's mind a wrong way of conceiving the practice.

SECOND KRIYA: TRIBHANGAMURARI MACRO MOVEMENT

[Correct name according to tradition : Fifth Kriya]

First stage of practice: Amantrak

Exceptionally, just to experience this *Tribhangamurari* movement, start with a long and deep inhalation. The tongue is in *Kechari Mudra* or in baby *Kechari*. Very slowly, raise your awareness along the spinal canal, from *Muladhara* to *Bindu* (*Bindu*, the *Sikha* point, is located at the back of the head below the *Sahasrara Chakra* where the hairline forms a kind of vortex).

Then start a deep exhalation. *Prana* and awareness move slowly along the *Tribhangamurari* path. The *Tribhangamurari* path starts from *Bindu* riser very slightly towards the left part of the brain then descends

towards the right part of the body. Once it reaches a particular point in the back (which is about 5-6 centimeters higher than the height of the right nipple) it curves and moves to the left crossing the heart node. After reaching a point in the back (which is 5-6 centimeters lower than the height of the left nipple) it changes direction again and points towards *Muladhara*. This whole procedure, going up and down takes about a minute.

The correct practice, however, is to be able to perceive this path only mentally, forgetting the breath that will be free and very calm. Try several times to feel this inner movement.

We call this technique "*Amantrak*" which means "without the use of a *Mantra*". We have said that it is possible to perceive a complete movement of *Amantrak* in one minute. Whoever completes a lap in a shorter time, say 40 seconds, must not think that the practice is wrong.

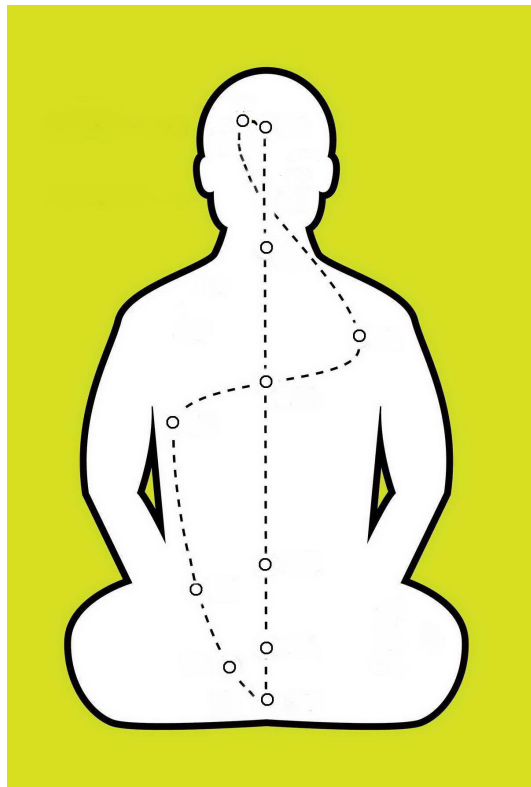


Fig7 Tribhangamurari path as seen from the back

We come to underline the most important aspect of this practice. Its essence consists in a constant intensification of mental pressure along the entire circuit. Consider the physical action of squeezing a nearly empty tube of toothpaste with a pencil to squeeze out whatever remains. Well, this image gives you a good idea of the amount of mental pressure you need to apply during this procedure. When you use great strength of concentration and will, there is no limit to the increase in energy flow along the *Tribhangamurari* path.

As for the routine, this advice is given: "For two weeks repeat this technique 25 times, once a day. Then for another two weeks repeat it 50 times, once a day; then for another two weeks 75 times ... and so on up to 200 times a day for two weeks. Only at this point are you supposed to be ready to practice the following *Samantrak* instruction."

Second stage of practice: Samantrak

Samantrak means: "with the use of a *Mantra*." Also in this procedure the breath is free, totally forgotten. [This is the usual teaching – but you are free to use an almost invisible form of breathing as long as this option proves useful and does not push you to proceed too quickly.]

The syllables *Om*, *Na*, *Mo*, *Bha*, *Ga* are vibrated respectively in the first five *Chakras*, *Ba* in *Bindu*. *Tee* (with eee... prolonged) is chanted in the upper center which is located in the left side of the brain. The syllables *Va*, *Su*, *De* and *Va* are placed in the four new centers outside the spine; *Yaaa* is vibrated in *Muladhara*.

These five new centers are to be considered five "vortexes" in the main flow of the current – therefore they are not a new set of *Chakras*. Each syllable, when vibrated, acts like a mental *Thokar*, like a tap that occurs in stillness. As the technique is performed slowly, there is plenty of time to make this stimulation very effective.

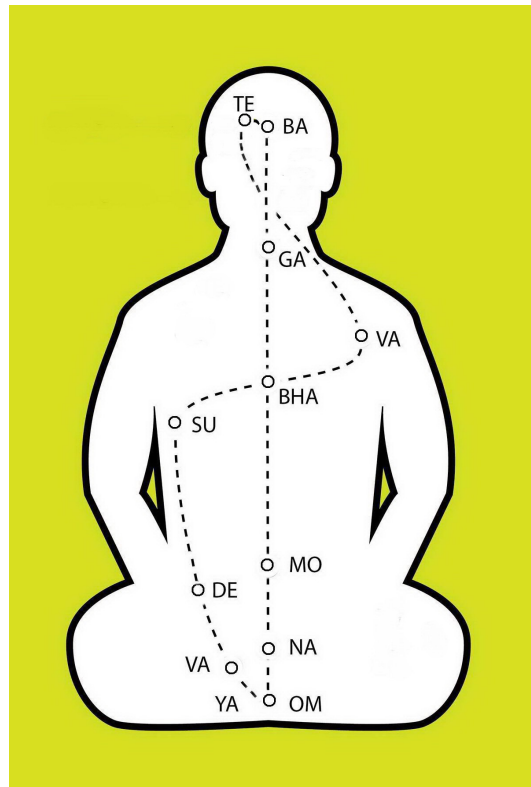


Fig.8 Tribhangamurari path, enriched with the syllables of the Mantra

The *Samantrak* route also takes about one minute. However, 40/45 seconds is an excellent time.

The essence of this procedure is to do what we have done in *Amantrak* and also to strengthen the mental pressure on the entire path by mentally vibrating the 12 syllables of the *Mantra*.

The number of daily practice repetitions that we have recommended for *Amantrak* practice now remain the same. ["For two weeks 25 times, once a day. Then 50 times once a day and so on up to 200"]

Don't be in a hurry

Amantrak and *Samantrak* create the perception of a particular inner movement in your body. The *Thokar* procedure should only be applied when this energy flow is well imprinted in your consciousness.

These techniques, correctly applied, have the power to create a permanent transformation in your attitude towards *Kriya*.

The syllables of the *Mantra* (*Om Namoh Bhagavate Vasudevaya*) are placed with great care as seeds in each center, they will change your mood. It's like turning on various lights along the three-curve path. It is as if the rays of a sun in a clear sky are finally entering your practice. You will make acquaintance with a hitherto unknown state of ecstasy while fully experiencing the beauty of life.

Some students try to immediately savor the power of *Thokar Tribhangamurari* and they do so through a sporadic, disordered experimentation of *Amantrak* and *Samantrak* far from respecting the said rules. What could be the true impact of the *Thokar Tribhangamurari* technique remains so unknown and not even remotely foreshadowed.

Third stage of practice: Thokar

[Remember that this *Thokar* is different from the one described in chapter 8]

Forget the breath. The hands (with intertwined fingers) are placed on the navel area so as to push up the abdominal region, thus creating a mental pressure on the first three *Chakras*. Place your chin on your chest and move your energy and awareness very slowly along the spinal column from *Muladhara* to *Bindu*.

The chin rises slowly as you "touch" each *Chakra* internally with the syllables of the *Mantra* (*Om* is placed in the first *Chakra*, *Na* in the second ...). When energy and awareness are in the *Bindu*, the chin is parallel to the ground.

Now the descent of the energy starts. The movement of the head will follow the energy flow along the *Tribhangamurari* path millimeter by millimeter. Everything will happen smoothly, in the space of thirty seconds or less. The description of the head movements that I am about to describe will, at first glance, seem complicated. With a minimum of patience, the right movement of the head will be learned: it is enough to understand that it has been conceived in the most logical and effective way to intensify the particular sinuous flow of energy and awareness. So we come to describe the movements of the head.

Without turning your face, move your head to the left, a couple of centimeters, then return to the middle by lifting your chin. During this movement the inner flow of energy moves from the *Bindu* to a higher point on the left side of the brain, as shown in the drawing. Stay in this position for just a moment while mentally saying the syllable *Tee*.

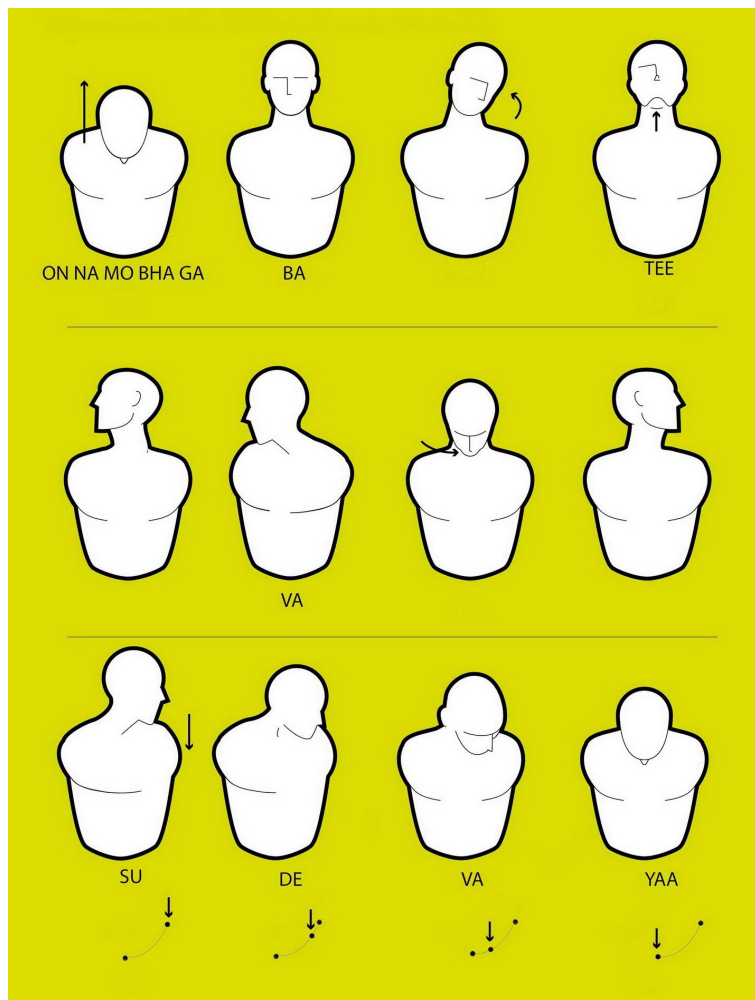


Fig.9 Thokar Tribhangamurari as seen from the front

Slowly turn your face to the right. Only the face moves, not the trunk. During this SLOW movement the internal flow of energy moves from the brain to the point of the back on the right side of the back. Everything happens as in *Amantrak*, as in *Samantrak* but now these simple movements of the head perfectly accompany the descent of the energy. Here the first of the five psycho-physical blows occurs: the chin touches the right shoulder for a moment and the syllable *Va* is vibrated in the eighth center. The shoulder also makes a small upward movement to make contact with the chin easier. But beware: if you feel you are forcing it, don't! If you cannot touch the right shoulder with the chin, be content to get as close to the shoulder as possible and stimulate the eighth center with pure mental strength and the vibration of the syllable *Va*.

Then the face slowly turns to the left accompanying, millimeter by millimeter, the internal flow of energy from the eighth to the ninth center, crossing the fourth *Chakra*. Now, if possible, the chin should reach over the left shoulder. The second blow occurs when the syllable *Su* is vibrated in the ninth center as the chin briefly touches the left shoulder – the shoulder makes a small upward movement to make contact with the chin easier.

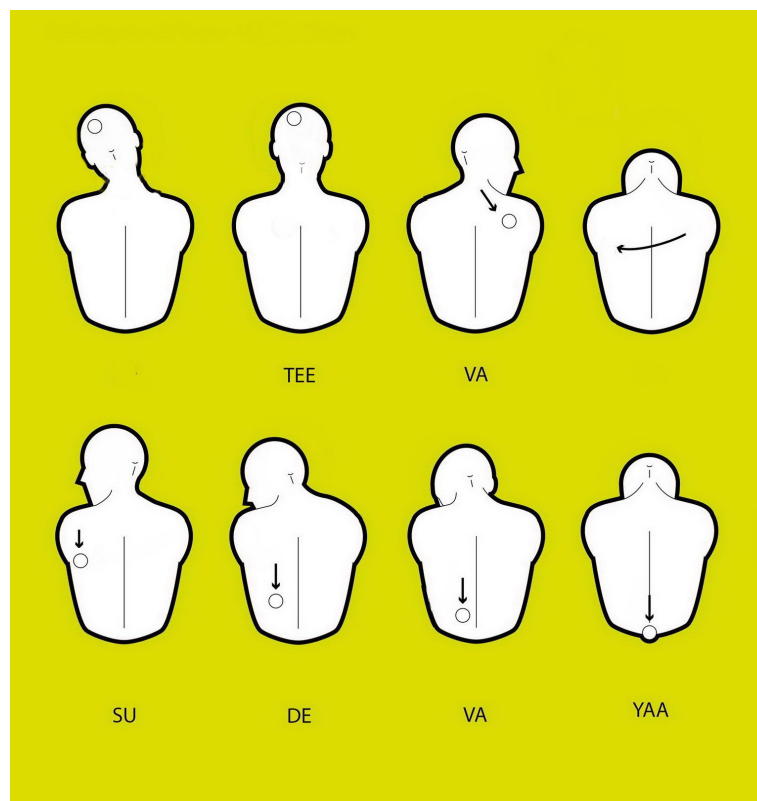


Fig.10 The same movements (only the descent) as seen from the back

Two more hits occur when the syllables *De* and *Va* are placed in the tenth and eleventh center. The modality is the following: the chin moves slowly towards the center of the chest, touching the left collarbone. During this movement, two light strokes are given to the left collarbone in intermediate positions. The blows, of course, are given when the syllables of the *Mantra* are vibrated. Finally, a blow is given to the chest (central position) when the syllable *Ya* is vibrated in *Muladhara*.

I hope it is clear that the essence of this particular procedure is to use the movements of the head (with the five strokes) to encourage a further intensification of mental pressure along the entire circuit.

Repeat the procedure 36 times. After completing the programmed number of rounds, calm the system by means of a minimal practice of *Samantrak*, then relax by practicing a simple mental *Pranayama*.

Expert supervision helps to avoid problems – I mean physical problems of overexertion and pain in the cervical vertebrae and neck muscles. Abrupt movements should be avoided; in their place a great mental intensity of concentration is used. For a couple of weeks it is good to avoid practicing this *Thokar* every day. Better every two or three days.

Remark

During this procedure the *Tribhangamurari* flow is intensified by the movements of the head. The problem is that many *kriyabans* focus all attention on delivering the blows and do not understand the value of creating mental pressure along every millimeter of the path.

We began by perceiving the sensation of movement that rises along the spine and descends along the three-curve path. Then with the *Samantrak* procedure we strengthened the perception of the 12 centers. Now we must feel that the movements of the head perfectly accompany, millimeter after millimeter, the flow of the internal current. We can try to intensify the perception of the internal flow by creating a mental pressure along each part of it. The movements of the head therefore serve to "touch with pressure" every millimeter of the path, up and down. The chin should be moved slowly as if we were trying to overcome a strong resistance. We suggested the idea: "like squeezing a nearly empty tube of toothpaste with a pencil to get the last little bit out."

Incremental routine of the Tribhangamurari macro movement

As soon as possible, aim to complete the incremental routine of this procedure. This will be a momentous time in your life.

The prescribed doses are as follows: 36x1, 36x2, 36x3,... .. 36x35, 36x36. Attention: between one stage and the next stage, at least a week

always elapses! This routine is very important. The effects are strong and involve a great inner transformation. A minimum of 8-10 months is required to complete it.

Therefore, while *Amantrak* and *Samantrak* were practiced every day, the incremental sessions of *Thokar Tribhangamurari* will be practiced once a week: the time needed to metabolize the subconscious material that the strong action exerted on *Muladhara* and the heart *Chakra* brings to the surface.

It starts with 36 rounds; a week later you practice 36x2, then 36x3 ... and, by increasing, you finally get to 36x36 repetitions. This means 1296 full rounds!

Can you imagine the powerful effects of this action? 1296 means that you start in the morning and finish at night, repeating the same action many times over. There is no doubt that you will be able to open the door of the *Sushumna*! Of course you have prepared this experience by practicing 36x35, and before 36x34 And let's not forget that you have practiced *Amantrak* and *Samantrak* for several months!

A personal tip on this Incremental Routine

What I am explaining to you here is not part of the original teaching, so make the use that your intuition suggests. This is just an observation made by me and by some researchers, my friends, who have shared these experiences with me.

I am simply referring that you may find that *Thokar* works very effectively if you practice it from a certain moment onward by whispering the syllables of the *Mantra*.

During the initial part of the incremental session of *Thokar Tribhangamurari*, keep your mouth closed and tongue in *Kechari Mudra*. But after half of the session, forget *Kechari*, and begin to whisper each of the twelve syllables, mentally directing them towards the seat of the respective center. You will feel that each slight pronunciation creates a sensation of warmth in each center; you will perceive a particular joy. Proceed slowly "exhaling" each syllable on each center from your lips. This light touch accompanied by a mental intention has a particular power that creates joy. Remarkable is what happens during the downward movement, that is with the last six syllables, in particular in *Muladhara* where you can stop: in those moments create the desire to increase the sense of joy and you will succeed!

A second personal tip

After completing this long process (*Amantrak*, *Samantrak* and *Thokar*) you can experience the following procedure. This is also not part of the original

teaching.

Thokar Tribhangamurari using the breath

We have described the *Tribhangamurari* techniques explaining that they must be practiced with free, uncontrolled breathing. Now let's try to describe the *Thokar* procedure involving the breath. It is a variant adopted by some: I find it fantastic!

Inhale by mentally placing the syllables *Om Na Mo Bha Ga Ba* in the relevant *Chakras*. The chin is raised by accompanying the current within the spine. At this point hold your breath and, in this state of *Kumbhaka*, mentally descend along the *Tribhangamurari* three-curve path, doing the typical movements of *Thokar Tribhangamurari*, placing the five mental syllables *Tee Va Su De Va* in the centers that are outside the spine dorsal. The syllable *Yaaa* is placed in *Muladhara*.

Usually the final three blows (*De Va Yaaa*) produce a sense of ecstasy. The last movement, that is the blow on *Muladhara*, is pleasant in a special way: the energy is intensified in this *Chakra*. Take a few seconds to feel this sensation of energy.

Now begin a slow exhalation creating with the breath a clear sound *eeeeee* Feel that the *Om* vibration comes down from the *Medulla* and penetrates the heart *Chakra*. It is important to feel it strongly in the heart.

The practice is so beautiful that you will often go into an ecstatic state during the practice itself. You will feel drunk with joy. Repeat this procedure 36 times. Then you can close this practice by resuming the *Samantrak* technique – with a free breath while maintaining stillness.

Digression on the Effects of Intensive Thokar Practice

We are often governed by superficial emotions that come from our fears, our weaknesses, our pessimism. Very important is the ability to keep these emotions at bay, continuing on one's own path even when we suffer from an excruciating conflict. It is the incremental *Thokar* routine we have just described that helps us control those emotions.

I tried to trace the topic "emotions" in some oriental books but I encountered so much rhetoric, so many words that do not touch the essence of the problem. These texts distinguish between positive emotions (affection, happiness, fulfillment ...) and negative (envy, aggression and illusion ...) After boring and useless rankings, we still cannot grasp the essential fact: superficial emotions that are not controlled can create disasters in our life.

We all know how violent, frantic and hysterical emotions often suddenly arise in our being and soon disappear. In fact, they express a private reality of authentic depth, but they possess a driving force that ends

in hasty actions, experienced in a kind of cerebral fever nourished by a petty visceral pleasure. When passion inflames the whole being, it is not possible to listen to the guidance of common sense.

Just as in summer the hail grains are created, condensed and thickened in the air before falling to the earth producing all possible disasters, fatal decisions begin to take shape in our imaginations. During frequent daydreams, the prospect of giving up something positive but demanding a lot of effort casts a false light on our immediate future, so that what in the past would have made us ashamed of cowardice now seems to shine on the horizon of our existence as a dull, shapeless, gloomy sky that suddenly becomes serene and lights up with a bright blue.

When we are drawn into action by such seductive emotions we pave the way for catastrophe. A wrong decision will be our crucifixion, a solid and definitive pact with a state of disappointment that will last a lifetime.

Sometimes it almost seems as if a person wants to stubbornly assert their "*right to pain and suffering*" [this is an expression of *The Mother*, Sri Aurobindo's chief disciple and companion.] An indomitable force is capable of creating misfortunes in our life. For example, sudden emotions push one to interrupt a course of study and throw away a profession that he has dreamed of for years, for which he has fought, suffered. It does the same with a loved one, with friends, with the family itself. Nothing can stop this person: the wise words of true friends no longer have any power.

We often break important ties with people because we think some of our choices have received unwarranted criticism. A breakup of a friendship relationship is a great loss, especially if it is the product of pride. Many people are bothered by sincere and constructive criticism as if it were a useless display of cruelty. The stronger a keen observation has, the more they feel as if they are swallowing a piece of black, sharp-edged stone.

A *kriyaban* who believes he is listening to the voice of his heart but who is actually driven by humiliating frustrations can reject any argument and harm himself in various ways with actions that astound those around him. A few days or months pass and a sense of heaviness appears; the subtle deception of the mind, however, creates the firm conviction that every person endowed with dignity could not have acted differently. The person loves to repeat to himself that underneath his actions there is a sacred motive linked to destiny and karma.

If the risk of retracing one's steps appears, pride prevails. Wisdom has no chance of prevailing. A strange frenzy fills the mind, ensuring that every action is enjoyed with an uninterrupted voluptuousness, surrounded by flashes of blue. Yet in the heart will remain a pain that will never end. Much of one's spiritual aspiration will remain trapped in a past that can no longer be reached due to the fear of having to bear the full impact of a true

and honest memory.

Well, an intense work with the Thokar, protracted, if necessary, for years is the only thing that can affect the perverse mechanism we have described. By working hard with this procedure we can change our attitude to act in the way we have tried to describe. Understanding *Lahiri Mahasaya's Kriya* also means understanding this!

THIRD KRIYA: TRIBHANGAMURARI MICRO MOVEMENT

[Correct name according to tradition : Sixth Kriya]

Introducing a person to this procedure means explaining that the *Tribhangamurari* movement also exists within each *Chakra* in small dimensions, for this reason we speak of the *Tribhangamurari micro movement*.

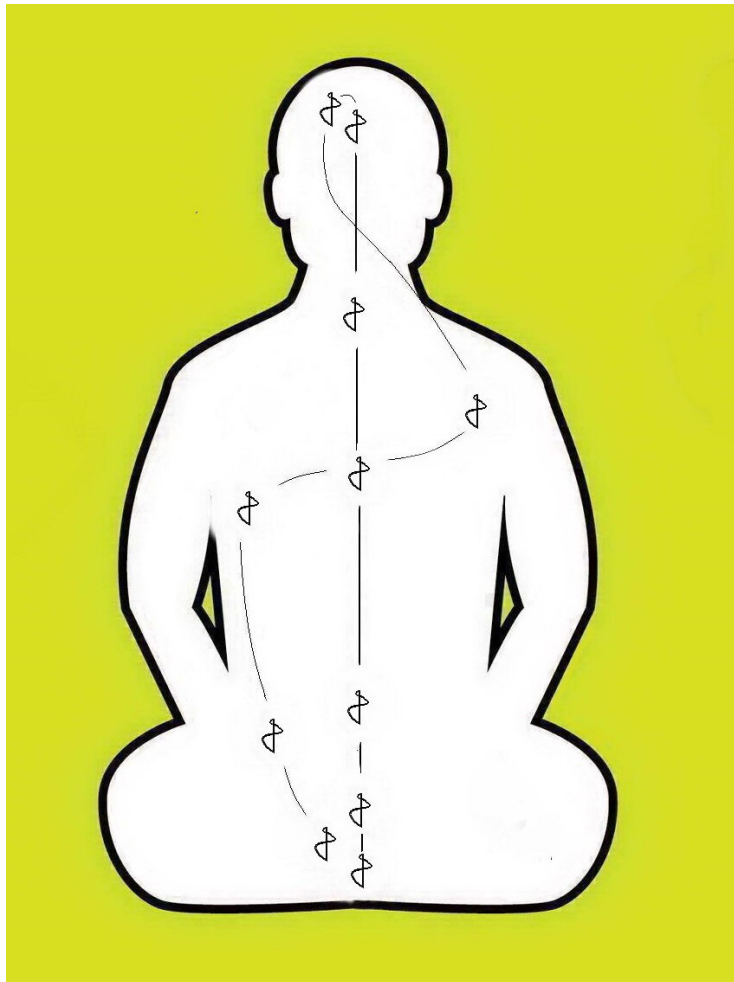


Fig.11 Tribhangamurari micro movement in each of the 12 centers

The work in the spine now takes place in a more subtle way, in each of the twelve centers that are found along the *Tribhangamurari* path. The time

required to repeat this work in each center up and down becomes very large. Usually one faces this practice in the last years of his life. Then, when the work in the *Chakras* is completed, one repeats this practice only in *Kutastha* preparing for the *Mahasamadhi*: the final conscious exit from the body at the moment of death.

This *Kriya* is taught in two steps: *Amantrak* and *Samantrak*. This practice is globally called *Muladhara Granti Ved* (unfastening the knot of *Muladhara*.) I do not want to indulge in rhetorical quotations, I can only say that by means of this procedure one becomes able to leave the dimension of time and space and reach the highest state of *Asamprajnata Samadhi* which leads to the *Kaivalya* state.

Practical instruction: how to perceive the Micro movement

We first learn to experience the *Tribhangamurari* movement in small dimensions within each of the 12 centers of the *Tribhangamurari* path. Keep the shape of this movement in your mind.

Do this experiment: through a short inhalation, lift the *Prana* from *Muladhara* to the spiritual eye between the eyebrows. Lower your chin slightly, hold your breath and look "down" at the *Muladhara Chakra*. Visualize it as a horizontal disk with a diameter of about 2-3 centimeters. Slowly try to perceive the *Tribhangamurari* movement in reduced dimensions on that disc.

Don't worry about the time it takes – it can be short, it can be long ... it doesn't matter. Apply moderate but continuous pressure on the disc as if you were holding a pen and making a clear and precise mark.

From this moment on forget the breath. Repeat this practice only mentally in the first *Chakra*. Move to the second *Chakra* and repeat the same procedure. Continue trying to perceive the micro-movement in *Chakras* 3, 4 and 5, then in *Bindu*, then in the center that is above *Bindu*, then in the four centers that are located outside the spine and finish this your first round in *Muladhara*.

Practice three "rounds" of this technique (*Amantrak micro*) every day for at least three months before beginning to increase the mental pressure on each center using the syllables of the *Vasudeva Mantra* (*Samantrak micro*.)

Tribhangamurari micro movement utilizing the Mantra

Practice *Kechari Mudra*. Lift the *Prana* from the *Muladhara Chakra* into the spiritual eye. From this position look "down" and visualize the *Muladhara Chakra*. Your breath is free. Mentally repeat the syllables "*Om-Na-Mo-Bha-Ga-Ba-Te-Va-Su-De-Va-Ya*". Do this *Japa* without haste. Try

to feel the *Tribhangamurari micro-movement* and realize how the 12 syllable mental chanting adds more "pressure" to it.

Remain motionless without making any movement of the spinal column or head. Here all the power of pressure must be obtained by the pure repetition of the syllables of the *Mantra*. Each syllable is like a small "pulse." What we explained to help the perception of the *macro movement*, that is, whispering the syllables instead of simply thinking them, still applies here. So make several attempts at what is most useful to you and decide for yourself.

The duration of a *micro movement* depends on the speed with which you repeat the *Mantra*. For many people it lasts approximately 10-12 seconds. Remember *Lahiri Mahasaya's* recommendation: "Don't be in a hurry!" Try to feel the difference between going slow and going fast. If you go slowly you will feel enormous power.

Repeat the *Vasudeva Mantra* three times. The *Prana* remains totally in the head. After three perceptions of the micro movement, repeat the same procedure for *Chakras* 2, 3, 4 and 5, then *Bindu*, then the point above *Bindu* on the left, then the four centers outside the spine and finally *Muladhara*. This is one "round": the practice of three rounds is excellent for concluding any *Kriya Yoga* routine. At the end of this practice, remain with the awareness centered in the light that you will perceive in the upper part of the head. If you proceed without haste, you will get a state that can be defined as "beyond time."

If, after the practice, you find the time to lie down on your back (*Savasana*) you will get a particular state of physical and mental stillness where the *Kundalini* energy can rise up to the heart *Chakra* while the *Kutastha* will reveal itself.

If you find time for an incremental routine you can increase by one round per session up to 20 rounds.

This technique has a mystery of Unearthly Beauty. Among the ruins of past illusions, it opens the doors of spiritual realization. This inner movement embodies the deeper aspect of the *Omkar* reality. Perceiving it means annihilating any form of duality present in the *Chakras* and therefore, in one's awareness. It is as if the center between the eyebrows becomes one with each *Chakra*, merging them into a single reality. The state of "absorption" created by having this particular perception in each *Chakra* is unmatched. A burning love for the Divine is born. Only a few *Kriya* schools have revealed the nature of this *micro movement* and revealed its importance. Unfortunately, many people are frantically searching for impossible surrogates for it!

Special incremental routine of the Tribhangamurari micro movement to be performed in the last part of life

When I received this instruction I was told that, similarly to *Yoni Mudra* which is practiced every night as a *kriyaban* sets out to take awareness out of the body and the physical world and prepares for sleep – which is a "little death" – thus the incremental routine of the *Tribhangamurari Micro Movement* is a peaceful return to the origin: a preparation to "die forever" – in the sense of becoming free forever, free in the Spirit. It has been explained that this last incremental routine, in addition to being the best preparation for the conscious exit out of the body at the time of death (*Mahasamadhi*), burns forever the need to reincarnate.

As for what happens during the *Mahasamadhi* process, we have heard many stories about possible "*Kriya* ways" of leaving the physical shell, but obviously we cannot guarantee their authenticity. Some claim that the typical way is *Thokar*, others hint at procedures which take place completely in *Kutastha*. We can reasonably assume that it is not always possible to perform the physical movement of *Thokar*. Focusing your awareness in the spine or the point between the eyebrows may be the only possible action.

Now let's clarify how this last routine is accomplished.

In this incremental routine (*Amantrak*: without using the *Mantra*) we have 36 practice sessions. What's new is that most of these sessions take more than a day.

On the first day, 36 *Micro movements* are perceived in each of the 12 centers. The second session requires to perceive 36x2 *Micro movements* in each center. [72 *Micro movements* are experienced in the first *Chakra* without interruption, then 72 in the second *Chakra* and so on] After a few days, the third session is practiced which includes 36x3 *Micro movements* in each center. Then other days pass. Then we have the 36x4 whose practice can take up a whole day.

The next steps: 36x5, 36x6, 36x7 36x8 usually take a full day and even part of the following day. Here what is normally not done happens: sleeping a whole night between the two parts of what is considered a single session. What is important is that in the morning of the following day you recover more or less immediately after waking up. So it is not allowed to go to work and it is also recommended to remain silent, avoiding any opportunities for conversation. (The use of common sense should always prevail, however; if someone speaks to us, a polite response is always a

duty.)

It can now be understood that if the following sessions take several days; the last session takes about 12 days!

Just to be sure that one understands, let's try to describe what happens during the last session: one perceives 36x36 micro movements in each center! This means: 1296 micro movements in *Muladhara*, 1296 in *Swadhisthana* and so on, ending again after several days in *Muladhara* with 1296 perceptions.

I must emphasize that it is not allowed to skip any stages. Don't think, "During my next summer vacation I will easily find a dozen days to practice 36x36." No! It doesn't work that way. Before you can feel the *Micro movement* 36x36 times in each center, you must have felt it 36x35 times. And first of this, 36x34 times, and so on

Completing this incremental routine without using the *Mantra* and then repeating it using the 12-syllable *Mantra* is truly a gigantic achievement. Many wonderful experiences will happen and the last internal obstacles will be dissolved one after the other. When the practice is completed, one finds that one cannot describe one's experience as the bliss experienced has partially erased from memory what happened.

A *kriyaban* should make every effort to create the opportunity to indulge (as old age approaches) the joy, the privilege of completing the recommended number of repetitions without ever giving in to the temptation to practice hastily.

As we said in the introduction to the *Tribhangamurari micro movement*, in the last moments of life, when this work in the *Chakras* is completed, one concentrates only in *Kutastha*. The main purpose of this instruction is to penetrate the star of *Kutastha*.

Mentally repeat the syllables of the *Mantra* you have used so far in the space between the eyebrows until you really see the *Tribhangamurari* form. It is clear that it does not originate from the visualization process. This experience is a spontaneous experience that occurs at the right time.